



Washington

DC PUBLIC SERVICE HOUSING STRATEGY

Washington, DC

Technical Assistance Panel | November 20–21, 2024

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District of Columbia Office of Planning

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Flickr user TED EYTAN

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Executive Summary

The National Capital Region’s public service sector — federal government, the District and local governments, international organizations, and nonprofits — is a major component of the regional economy. This industry cluster comprises more than 290,000 jobs in the District alone. College and university students—with more than 60,000 living in the District—make up another important sector. Together, these clusters represent a significant opportunity to increase the resident population in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods. Planning for this growth must be sensitive to changes across the federal workforce and uncertainty about the regional economy. This Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) was requested by the project sponsor, the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP) to recommend housing strategies that would support economic development and expand the number of students and early-career public service professionals living in this area.

DCOP outlined the following **goals** for the TAP:

- Recommend how to leverage DC’s unique economic profile as a competitive advantage to retain and grow the student population and public service industry cluster.
- Identify opportunities to leverage the presence of key institutions, as key partners and implementers for these housing strategies.
- Develop a housing framework to attract and retain students and early career professionals in the public service industry cluster, in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Recommend housing types that could provide more housing opportunities—particularly in Downtown DC—to higher education students and early career public service professionals.

To guide the panel’s work, DCOP posed these questions:

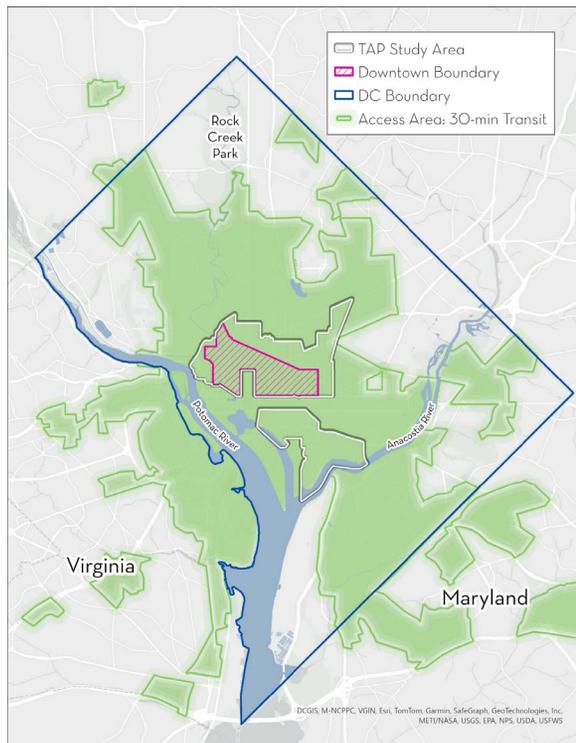
- How can DC leverage its unique economy as a competitive advantage to retain and attract higher education students and early-career public sector professionals?
- What are the most significant opportunities and challenges to providing more housing in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods for these sectors?
- What housing strategies can be initiated by DC and its partners to increase housing opportunities in the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods to support growth in the public service industry cluster and attract more students to Downtown DC?
- What policy interventions should the District consider to expand housing options for professionals in the public service workforce pipeline?
- What types of housing should DC add to the housing stock in the study area to leverage its competitive advantage to attract and retain post-secondary students and early-career public service cluster professionals?
- How can DC leverage large institutional and federal government assets to provide housing for students and young professionals pursuing careers in public service?
- What partnerships are necessary to implement these housing strategies and what role could each partner play?



DC POLICY CENTER

The Study Area

The study area for the assignment was Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods—roughly 17 square miles, an area about half the size of Manhattan. The study area included the neighborhoods of Foggy Bottom, West End, Dupont Circle, Logan Circle, Mt. Vernon Square, Penn Quarter, Chinatown, Judiciary Square, NoMa, Southwest, and Capital Riverfront. In 2021, this area contained more than 390,000 jobs but only a little over 100,000 residents. It is an area where the District has focused its efforts to springboard housing production, many of which are featured in this report, resulting the addition of approximately 25,000 units since 2016.

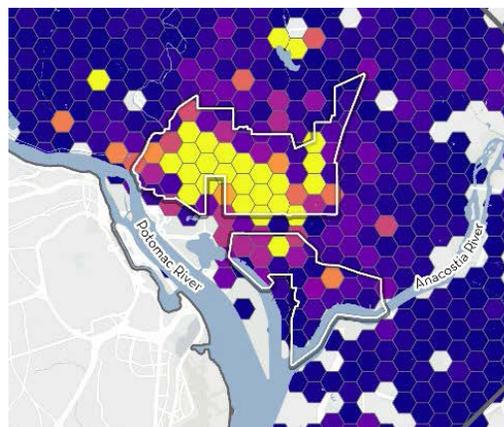


The TAP Study Area's location relative to Downtown and the DC boundary, with a 30-minute transit shed in green

Opportunities and Challenges

The panelists met with 24 project stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges that the District faces to continue to grow the supply of housing for students and early-career public service professionals Downtown. Here, students and young professionals have access to several world-class educational institutions, an excellent Metro system, appealing amenities like open spaces, museums, sports venues, and a variety of entertainment offerings. As the seat of the Federal government, DC offers many opportunities for internships, fellowships, and career advancement.

Downtown also has its challenges, including high housing costs, blocks with little vitality after work hours, and a limited number of programs designed to help this demographic afford housing in the area. In addition, many stakeholders cited regulations that inhibit developers' ability to build more affordable units, particularly for conversions from other uses to residential, which can be difficult and expensive, even under the best conditions.



Job Density in the study area relative to the rest of Washington, DC

Recommendations

The panel's recommendations fell into four categories—DC's Competitive Advantage, Partnerships and Development Models, Legislative and Zoning Solutions, and Balanced Neighborhoods and Housing Types. Additional research and analysis may be necessary to navigate federal workforce different from that at the time of this TAP. The highest priority recommendations in each category are below.

DC's Competitive Advantage

- Work with universities, the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area (CUWMA), and other partners in the District to forecast supply and demand for student housing.
- Develop a marketing plan targeted to students and early-career professionals to demonstrate the opportunities and appeal of living in Downtown DC.
- Identify key buildings, locations, and neighborhoods to support pilot projects that would demonstrate "proof of concept" to

both potential residents and developers who would consider developing housing for this cohort in the downtown area.

Partnership and Development Models

- Work with GSA to identify properties that could be redeveloped, with particular attention to GSA properties that have the best prospects for conversion.
- Leverage DC’s existing programs to partner with developers interested in increasing the supply of rental and for-sale housing that is affordable and appealing for this target demographic.
- Encourage major employers and academic institutions to consider master leases—either individually or as a group—to provide housing for students and early-career public service employees.
- Build a coalition of for-profit and nonprofit institutions—colleges and universities, employers, economic development organizations— with a vested interest in increasing the supply of attainable housing in DC’s Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The coalition could: 1) develop a shared understanding of future demand and supply of Downtown DC housing for this cohort, 2) elevate housing as a priority in their planning for future development; and 3) explore options for joint residential projects.

Legislative and Administrative Solutions

- **Mitigate and reduce regulatory barriers to new development**, particularly office-to-residential conversions. This could include adjustments to inclusionary zoning regulations and additional relief on entitlements, permitting, Green Area Ratios (GAR) and Stormwater Management (SWM) in connection with the downtown housing abatement, specifically targeted to housing in the study area.
- Expand the Employer-Assisted Housing Program (EAHP) program to include additional employers, renters in addition to the homebuyers the program currently supports, and a preference for Downtown and adjacent neighborhood locations. The Panel also recommended considering the expansion of the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP) to offer benefits to a larger portion of early-career public service professionals and the establishment of additional employer-assisted housing programs by institutions that operate in the industry cluster.
- Develop a toolbox of potential code waivers that may be useful and can be easily deployed to developers for building conversions in the study area.

Balanced Neighborhoods – Diverse Housing Types

- **Adopt pre-approved prototype architectural designs or blueprints** of a range of high-density housing typologies that have been vetted by the District’s Office of Planning and Office of Zoning and can be used by developers “by-right.”
- Take steps to improve the common realm in ways that appeal to students and early-career public professionals. This could include filling empty ground floor spaces with public programs and amenities, activating pocket parks, and improving public pathways with public seating, public art and improved lighting.
- Encourage property owners to increase the synergy between ground floor spaces and the street front with upgrades like moveable glass walls, outdoor dining, farmer’s markets and entertainment.
- Improve access to and quality of public transit systems—both bus and rail—as well as bikeways to make them even more available and appealing.
- Encourage the development of a more diverse range of housing types. This includes purpose-built housing for students, group homes, high-density multi-family units, designed for sharing by unrelated individuals, and missing middle housing types.



The Assignment

Purpose & Need

The purpose of the TAP was to recommend housing strategies that the District can adopt to support economic development, strengthening the workforce pipeline for the DC's largest industry- the public service industry cluster. Growing the number of public service workers, early career professionals, and higher education students living in the District will support Districtwide economic growth and help to reimagine and reinvigorate Downtown DC .

The public service industry cluster powers the region's economy, and includes the federal government, the District and local governments, international organizations, and nonprofits. This industry cluster comprises more than 290,000 jobs in the District alone.

In addition, more than 60,000 college students live in the District, and more than 80,000 students attend the nine DC-based universities. Many of these students choose to study in DC because they want careers in public service. Housing strategies that enable those in the workforce pipeline to live in the District as they advance their careers will help grow the District's economy and ensure that the region has the best talent pipeline. With roughly 30 percent of the federal workforce eligible for retirement in the next five years, the federal government needs a strong pipeline of early-career public service professionals to fill these upcoming vacancies, in addition to meeting future and emerging needs.

Rental housing is critical for the students, interns, fellows, and entry-level professionals in public service. Employees in the public service industry cluster can only afford the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in 34 percent of census tracts within a 30-minute transit commute to Downtown DC¹. The lower-cost housing in these areas is in high demand, and many of the dedicated affordable housing units do not accommodate students and early career professionals, especially those without DC residency.

The TAP was asked to recommend housing strategies that would support economic development to attract and retain students and early-career professionals pursuing careers in the public service industry cluster in support of economic development. These strategies should draw on the assets and resources of the federal government, universities, institutions, and businesses. In particular, the TAP was asked to focus on opportunities to increase housing for these groups in Downtown DC and nearby neighborhoods. The TAP was asked to identify housing types and partnership strategies that are attainable to and supportive of students and early career professionals pursuing careers in public service and to recommend the roles of key organizations in implementing these strategies. In addition, the TAP's recommendations should support the District's approach to boosting upward mobility by identifying strategies that meet the needs of more

residents to advance racial equity by improving access to good jobs, especially for those impacted by structural racism.

Problem Statement

As the seat of the nation's capital, the District is the country's largest labor market for the public service industry cluster. The federal government alone has over 195,000 employees in the District, and there are more than 50,000 jobs with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), not-for-profits, think tanks, philanthropies, and institutions. Although the District has many public service jobs and educational opportunities, high housing costs and slow wage growth in the public sector make it hard to attract and retain the workforce².

The expansion of DC-based colleges and universities and non-local or satellite university campuses in the District presents an opportunity to leverage higher educational institutions in Downtown to expand the pipeline of local public service workers. Today, there are more than 35 satellite campuses in Washington, DC, five of which opened in 2022³. Many of these programs are in or near Downtown DC due to the proximity to the federal government, international institutions, and nonprofits, and they offer academic programs that support careers in public service.

¹ *US Census 2018-2022 American Community Survey*, US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2018-2022 Median Family Income Limits, DC Office of Planning

² *Government Wage Growth Lags Private Sector by Largest Margin on Record*, PEW (February 2022) [\[link\]](#)

³ Salai, Sean, "Satellite campuses of far-flung colleges in orbit around nation's capital", *The Washington Times* (May 2023) [\[link\]](#)

Assumptions

The TAP developed recommendations under the following assumptions:

- High housing costs in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods drive higher education students and early career public sector professionals outside the District to neighboring jurisdictions or out of the region altogether.
- More students and young professionals would stay in the District post-graduation and as their careers advance if more housing options were affordable and located near job and education opportunities.
- Growing and supporting the public service industry cluster is one of the District's best opportunities for economic growth.

Goals of the TAP

The DC Office of Planning outlined the following goals for the panelists:

- Recommend how to leverage DC's unique economic profile as a **competitive advantage** to retain and grow the student population and public service industry cluster.
- Identify opportunities to **leverage the presence of key institutions**, as key partners and implementers for these housing strategies.
- Develop a **housing framework** to attract and retain students and early career professionals in the public service industry cluster, in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Recommend **housing types** that could provide more housing opportunities—particularly in Downtown DC—to higher education students and early career public service professionals.

Key Questions to Address

The DC Office of Planning posed the following questions to guide the panel's work:

- How can DC leverage its unique economy as a **competitive advantage** to retain and attract higher education students and early-career public sector professionals?
- What are the most significant **opportunities and challenges** to providing more housing in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods for these sectors?
- What **housing strategies** can be initiated by DC and its partners to increase housing opportunities in the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods to support growth in the public service industry cluster and attract more students to Downtown DC?
- What **policy interventions** should the District consider to expand housing options for professionals in the public service workforce pipeline?
- What **types of housing** should DC add in the study area to attract and retain post-secondary students and early-career public service cluster professionals?
- How can DC **leverage large institutional and federal government assets** to provide housing for students and young professionals pursuing careers in public service?
- What **partnerships** are necessary to implement these housing strategies and what role could each partner play?

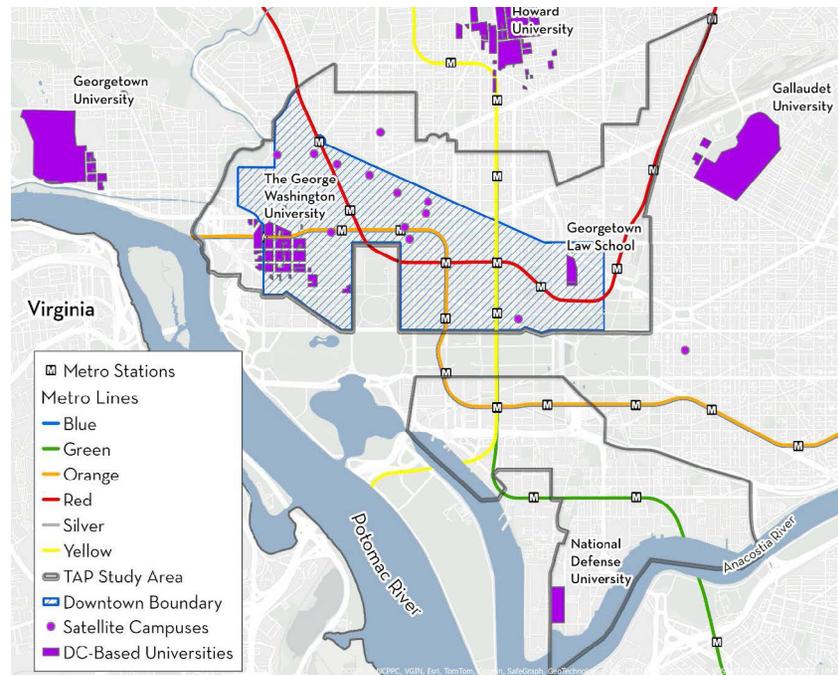
TAP Study Area

The study area for the TAP was Downtown DC—with few residences—and the adjacent neighborhoods—with high residential densities. These areas of the District—defined by census tracts and shown to the right—contain the highest density of public service jobs in the city and present a significant opportunity for housing growth to serve students and young professionals pursuing careers in public service.

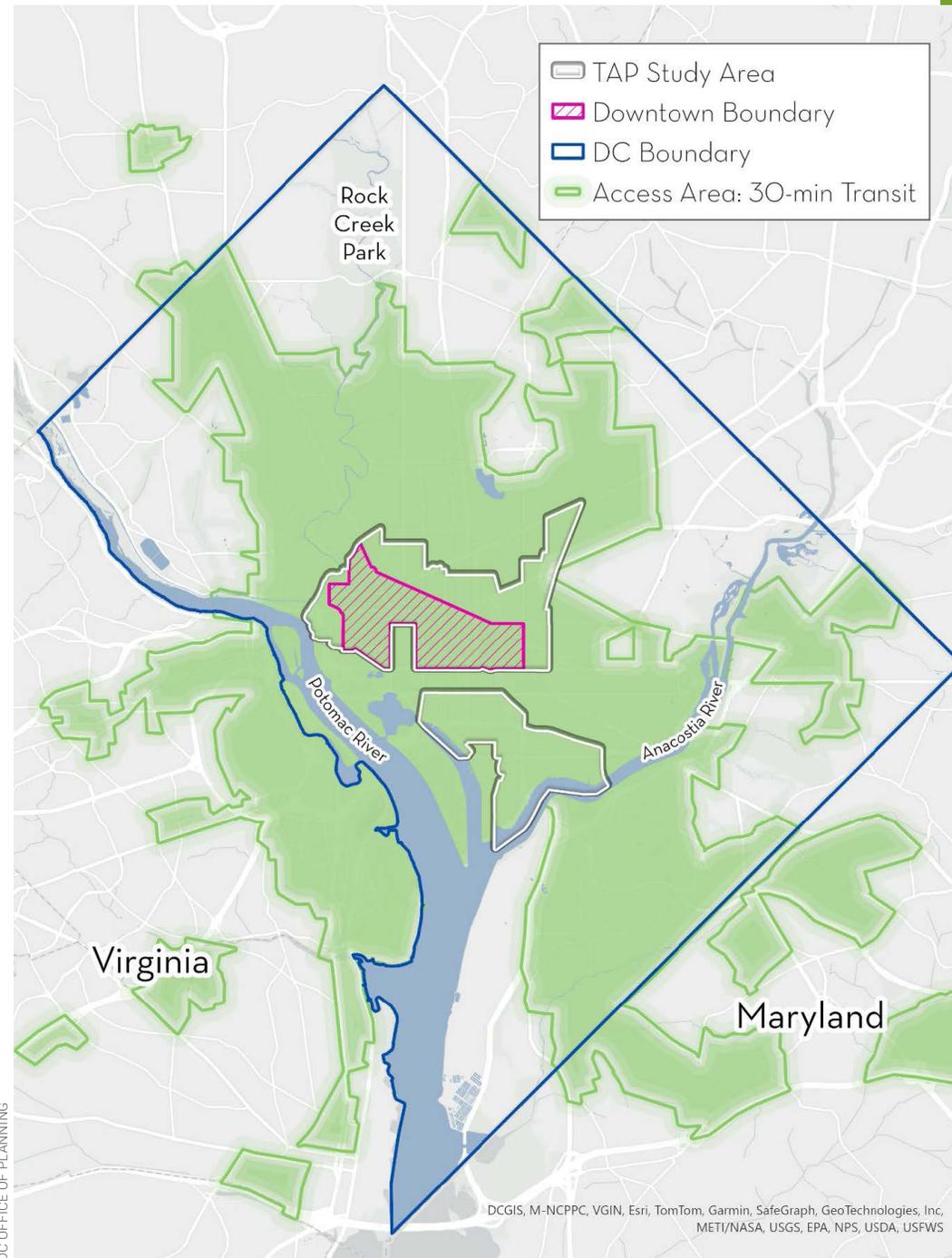
The study area of roughly 17 square miles includes the neighborhoods of Foggy Bottom, West End, Dupont Circle, Logan Circle, Mt. Vernon Square, Penn Quarter, Chinatown, Judiciary Square, NoMa, Southwest, and Capitol Riverfront. In 2021, the study area contained more than 390,000 jobs, representing 62% of all employment opportunities within the District.⁴ The study area currently houses roughly 101,900 people—about the seating capacity of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum—in 60,400 housing units.⁵

⁴ US Census OnTheMap, 2021 [\[link\]](#)

⁵ ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023



TAP Study Area, Central DC



TAP Study Area, District Context

DCGIS, M-NCPPC, VGIN, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

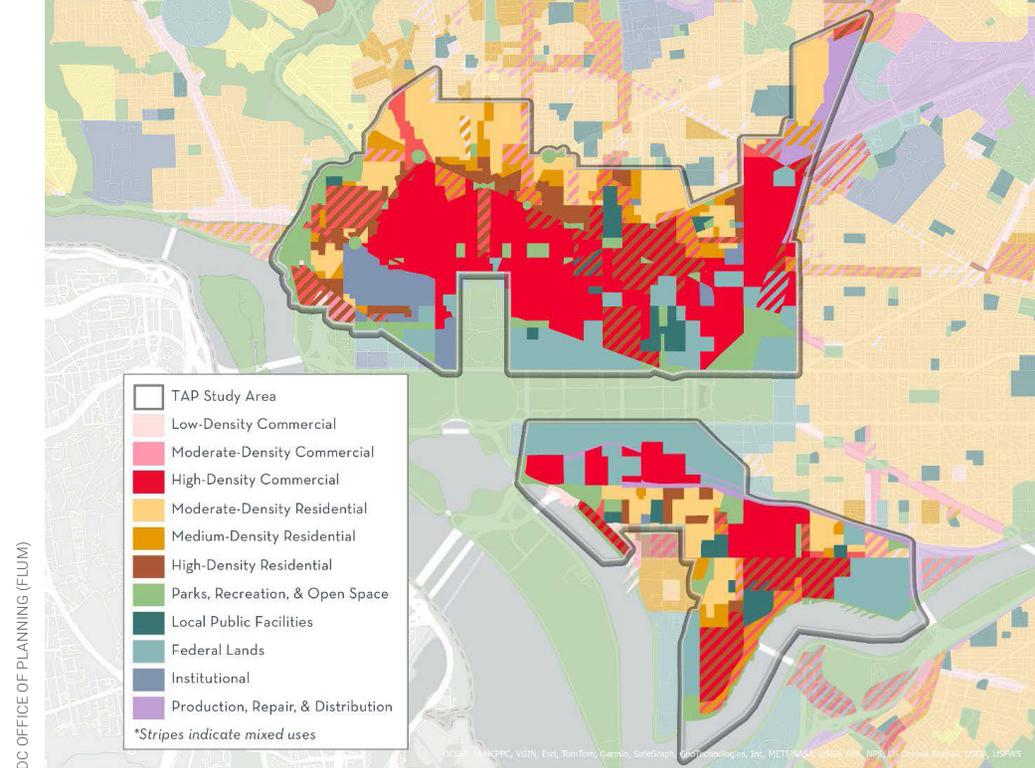
Land Use and Zoning Context

The TAP study area includes areas defined by the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) as high-density residential, commercial, mixed-use, and institutional uses (above to the right). Zoning in the study area (below) largely permits floor area ratios (FAR) between 6.0 and 10.0, with height limits set by the Height Act of 1910 between 90 and 130 feet.⁶

All zones within the study area permit housing except for a few Productions, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) zones. These PDR zones, indicated in both maps to the right in purple, only restrict future housing if the FLUM indicates them to remain as such, as rezoning to align with the FLUM designation could be done easily.

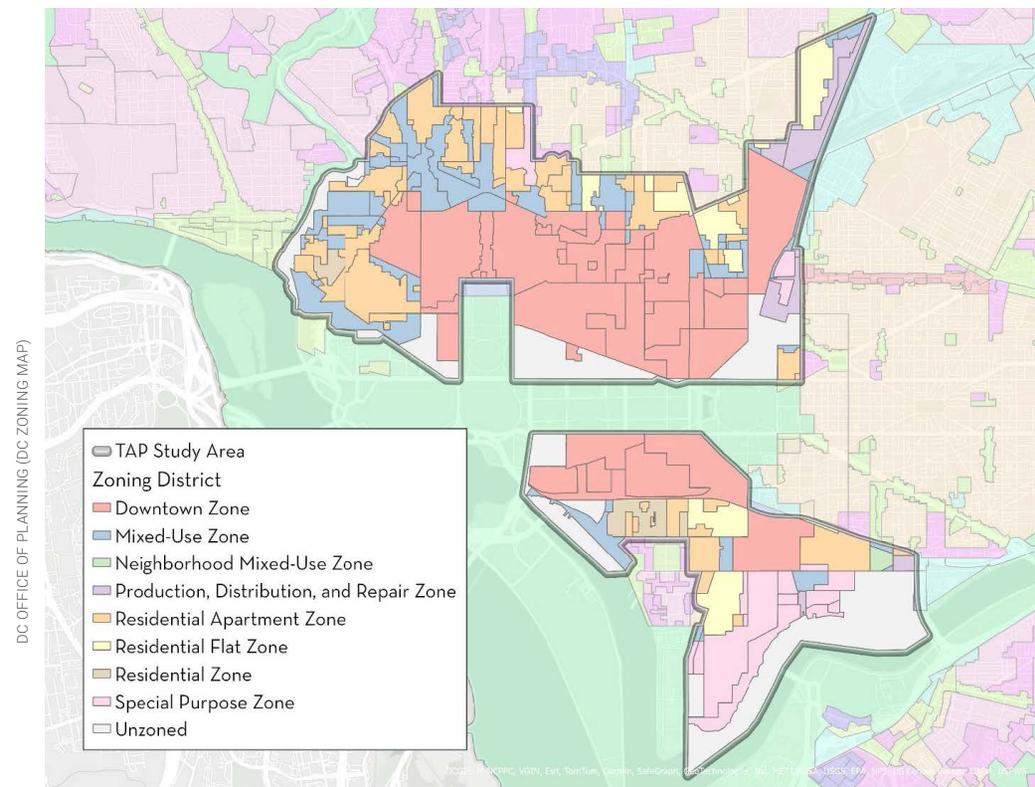
Certain zones encourage housing by removing any set FAR restrictions for housing. These include NoMa, Southwest, and Capitol Riverfront. Also, housing is required in a few zones in the Mt. Vernon Square, Penn Quarter, and Chinatown neighborhoods. The zones that encourage and/or require housing have been very successful, contributing to the approximately 25,000 residential units built in the study area since 2016.

⁶ Note: The Height Act does permit heights up to 160 feet, but only along a few blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest.



DC OFFICE OF PLANNING (FLUM)

Above: Study Area Future Land Use Map
Below: Study Area Zoning



DC OFFICE OF PLANNING (DC ZONING MAP)

Process

ULI's technical assistance panel (TAP) process typically includes the following steps.

1. **Develop Briefing Materials**—Prior to gathering on-site, the sponsor—in this case, the DC Office of Planning (DCOP)—prepares a briefing book with questions for the panel and extensive background material.
2. **Sponsor Reviews Briefing Materials and Brief's Panelists**—At the beginning of the two-day assignment, sponsor staff meet with panelists to present highlights of the briefing materials and discuss assumptions and goals for the TAP.
3. **Conduct Stakeholder Roundtable Discussions**—the panelists hold group interviews with stakeholders.
4. **Develop and Present Findings and Recommendations** - Panelists deliberate and develop their findings and recommendations. These are presented to sponsor representatives and sometimes to the public. A final written report is prepared and delivered.

Stakeholder Input - Summary

For this assignment, panelists interviewed 24 relevant stakeholders representing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), developers, DC and federal government, and colleges and universities. The stakeholders discussed many opportunities for increasing the supply of housing for this cohort, as well as challenges that, in their view, the District and its partners faced in their efforts to create more housing opportunities in the study area that is accessible and affordable to students and young professionals pursuing careers in public service. These opportunities and challenges are summarized here and provided in more detail in Appendix A.

The stakeholders all agreed that the District has a strong competitive advantage, among cities, to attract and retain significant numbers of higher education students and public service sector professionals. They mentioned the abundance of academic and nonprofit institutions, in addition to the many federal agencies and the U.S. Congress that are both magnets for this cohort and potential partners in developing new housing. Stakeholders also highlighted the many parks, entertainment and sports venues and cultural institutions and the excellent transit system.

The most significant challenge that the stakeholders discussed is the high cost and limited supply of housing in the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, which is affordable to students and early-career public service professionals. A second major challenge mentioned is the regulatory environment for residential development, especially for conversion from other uses, which can be difficult to navigate, with many obstacles that increase costs and delay the approval process. One stakeholder referred to this challenge as, "...death by a thousand cuts, which needs to be reduced to no more than one hundred." They also mentioned that parts of the study area feel sterile and unsafe, particularly after business hours. Finally, while there are many attractions in the District, the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods lack a coherent marketing strategy to attract this cohort to live in the study area.

A more detailed list of the opportunities and challenges stakeholders relayed to the panel can be found in [Appendix B](#).



Recommendations

To complete their work, the panel divided into four teams to prepare recommendations that address the goals outlined for the TAP. The panel was asked to address:

1. What is the District's **competitive advantage** in attracting higher education students and early career professionals in the public service sector?
2. What **partnerships and development models** should the District seek to implement housing strategies for this group?
3. What **legislative and zoning solutions** should DC improve to increase housing opportunities for this demographic?
4. What neighborhood features and **housing types** could be added to the Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods, which could expand housing options for students and early career professionals in public service and make neighborhoods in the study area more attractive to this demographic?

DC's Competitive Advantage

The District of Columbia is unique among cities in the U.S. with its rich assortment of federal administrative, legislative and judicial offices, international agencies, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, trade associations, think tanks and world-class educational institutions. These entities offer students and young professionals interested in public service with many opportunities

for study, work, and networking. Downtown DC and the adjacent neighborhoods have an abundance of open space, beautiful architecture, excellent health care, and a wide variety of cultural and entertainment offerings.

In this section, the panel recommends how these opportunities and amenities can help attract and retain more college and university students, and early career professionals pursuing careers in the public service industry cluster. The TAP panelist developed a series of recommendations for the District to consider over the short, medium and long-term to improve and highlight DC's competitive advantage.

Conduct Focus Groups and Surveys

The District should conduct focus groups and host an online survey to better understand what would attract students and early career professionals to live in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods. Key questions to consider are:

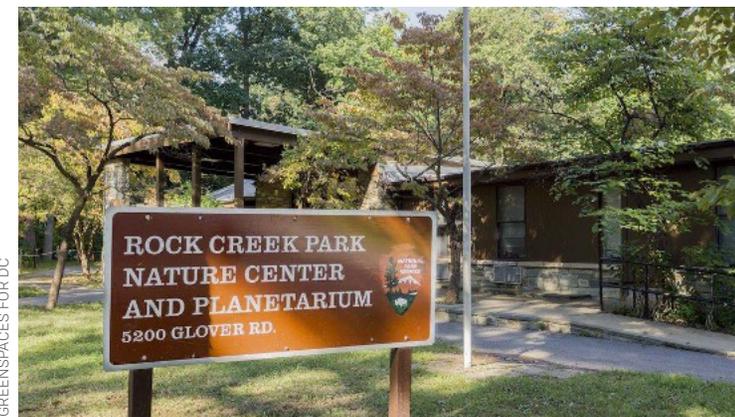
- What housing types are most appealing?
- What are the unique housing needs of students vs. interns and fellows vs. early career professionals?
- What kinds of amenities and attractions are most important for this market sector?
- What retail services are most important to them to have in their neighborhood?



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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



GREENSPACES FOR DC

Forecast Supply and Demand for Student Housing

To effectively plan to meet future student housing needs, the District should develop an understanding of the current and future demand for and supply of housing for students in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods. The District should work with the academic institutions in the area to:

- Inventory where students currently live off campus.
- Forecast student body growth.
- Forecast current and planned on-campus and off-campus student housing.

Each year, the Mayor’s Office of Housing in the Boston publishes a report that “... profiles a picture of enrollment changes and the geography of student living, including enrollment information, the number of full-time undergraduates and graduates being housed where students live off-campus (in terms of the type of housing and location), and dorm-bed production and planned beds.”⁷ Each year, colleges and universities are required to submit this data to the city in University Accountability Reports.

⁷ https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2024/06/Boston%20Student%20Housing%20Report_Final.pdf

With this information, the District can work with academic institutions to prepare a strategic plan designed to ensure that demand for student housing—including for interns, graduate students and fellows—is met with housing opportunities that are affordable and accessible to services and amenities that will attract and retain students.

Develop a Marketing Plan

The District should develop a marketing plan designed to attract and retain post-secondary students and early career professionals to live and work in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods. Stakeholders and panelists commented that DC is not considered as “hip” or “cool” as other cities. The marketing plan should directly address this image and include strategies for how parts of the study area can cater to and attract the target market.

District’s next Comprehensive Plan, DC 2050—As DCOP works toward updating the Comprehensive Plan, staff should be intentional about incorporating housing opportunities for this demographic in every step of the process. The focus groups and surveys, demographic analysis, and marketing plan recommended above could be part of the DC 2050 process and the goals and strategies developed through the DC 2050 process should reflect the priorities, which have been articulated throughout this TAP. Prepare to be nimble and directional, rather than prescriptive.

Actions to Leverage and Improve DC’s Competitive Advantage

Short-Term Actions

- Identify key buildings, locations, and neighborhoods within the downtown for pilot projects, which could be developed to demonstrate “proof of concept” of new housing models to developers, investors, students, and early career professionals.
- Conduct focus groups and online surveys, in partnership with BIDs and academic institutions, to better understand how this target market perceives DC as a place to live and what will attract and retain students and early career professionals.
- Partner with the DC-based universities, non-local universities with satellite campuses, and the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area to assemble data on the future supply of and demand for student housing.
- Develop a marketing plan that leverages DC’s competitive advantage to attract and retain students and young professionals.

Medium-Term Actions

- Partner with other organizations—Washington DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP), large employers, academic institutions, BIDs, ULI Washington—to retain a firm that specializes in

marketing cities and neighborhoods to develop a marketing plan and implementation strategy for attracting the target cohorts to live in Downtown.

- Review recommendations from this TAP that could align with DC 2050. Representatives from these clusters should be specifically included in establishing housing goals/strategies in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Partnership and Development Models

The panelists focused on what partnerships and development models could expand housing opportunities for students and young professionals in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods. Panelists also considered how these projects could be more attractive to capital.



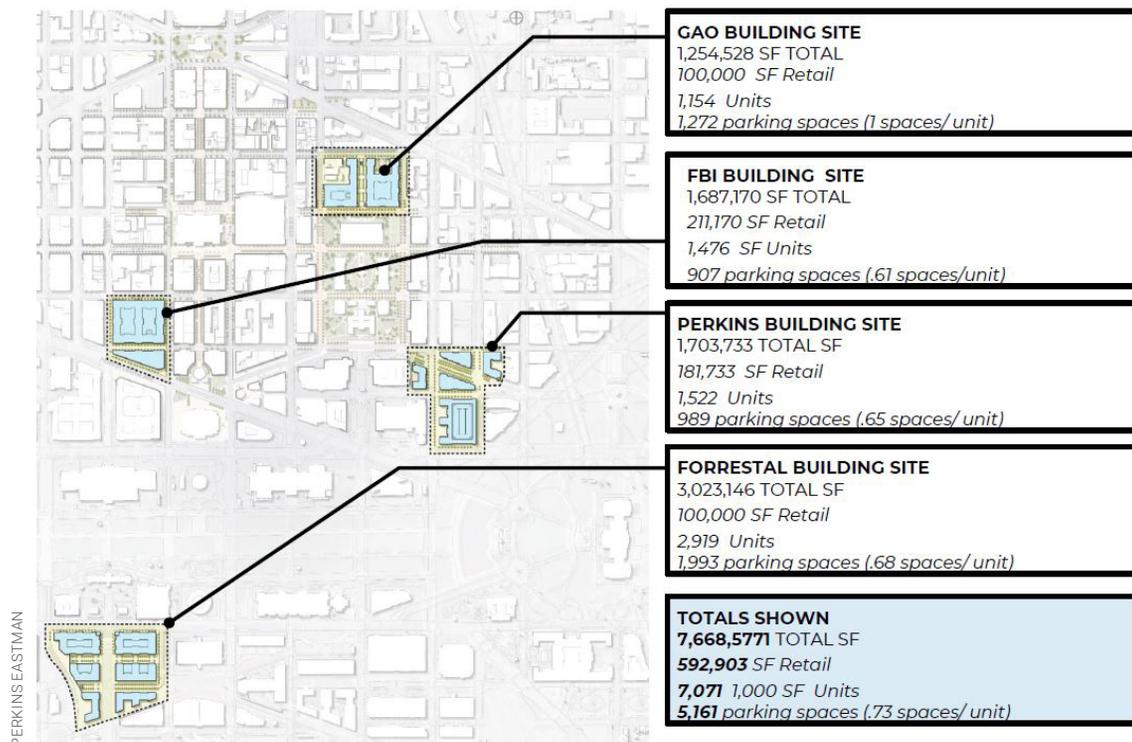
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

There is a wealth of organizations with which the District could partner to attract students and early career professionals to DC, including the federal government, DC-based universities, universities with satellite campuses, internship and fellowship programs, major employers, hospitals, and cultural institutions.

Many of these organizations have a vested interest in expanding the supply of for attainably priced housing in the Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods because their growth depends on the availability of an increasing supply.

Leverage GSA and DC Properties

GSA owns dozens of properties in the TAP study area many of which are well located for student and workforce housing. However, funding for master planning, due diligence, site preparation, demolition, and other steps that could improve a sites marketability are challenging. Currently, GSA is not able to use revenues from the sale of their assets to fund any pre-development activities and rather all revenue from their sale is returned to the federal government’s General Fund, rather than the Federal Building Fund. The federal government can, however, transfer control of surplus properties to the District at no or



PERKINS EASTMAN

Key Federal Properties as identified and reimagined by Perkins Eastman for DMPED, presented at the Building the Future: DC’s Economic Landscape, October 31, 2024 as part of “the Future of the Federal City” panel.

low cost. The District and federal government have used this model for projects including St. Elizabeth, Walter Reed and, most recently, the RFK Stadium site.

Leverage DC's Existing Programs to Partner with Developers

DC has several programs in place to increase the supply of housing at various price points. The panel reviewed these with an eye toward their success to date and suggested changes that, in the short-term, might make them more effective, especially in the study area. These include the following:

- **The High Area Needs Tax Abatement (HANTA)** – HANTA is an abatement of real property taxes available to new developments in certain planning areas outside of the study area. The panel recommends that HANTA be extended to planning areas that include Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
 - **Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF)** – HPTF is a major source of funding for affordable housing in the District. While only ten percent of these funds can be used to create units affordable to households between 50 and 80 percent of MFI, the city should consider whether a portion of these funds should be earmarked for new units within the study area.
 - **Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)** – The DC Auditor's report⁸ determined that of while only 5 percent of IZ units were vacant
- in developments surveyed, the time to occupy the units took too long.
 - **Housing in Downtown (HID)** – The HID program is a new, innovative tax abatement program designed to incent office-to-residential conversions to create more downtown housing. The program is expected to help achieve 90% of Mayor Bowser's goal of 15,000 new residents Downtown by 2028. The program is competitive, with available funds set by program caps. Some stakeholders felt the program was unpredictable due to its competitive nature, which can deter potential developers. The panel encourages the District to continue the program, consult developers and investors as it evolves, and quickly make updates if needed.
 - **Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)** – The Panel acknowledged that a PILOT funding structure, like the structure utilized at [George Washington University's "The Avenue" at Square 54](#), could help incentivize institutions to partner with developers while maintaining ownership of the land.

⁸ DC Auditor's Report. <https://dhcd.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhcd/publication/attachments/2024-2025%20IZ%20ADU%20price%20schedule%20-%202024-8-30.pdf>



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The Avenue (Square 54), is also a prime example of a successful employer/ developer partnership. The mixed-use project completed by Boston Properties in 2011 on land owned by GWU and leased to the developer. Thirteen percent of the residences (44 units) are offered to households earning 80-120 percent of the area medium family income. In addition, the leasing office also provides leasing services for seven additional nearby units, which are available to households with incomes up to 80 percent of MFI. Although not limited to students or hospital or university faculty, the location of the residences—so close to GWU, with easy access to transit, retail and other services—makes these units ideal for the target cluster. The project serves as a source of non-tuition driven revenue for the university.

Expanding Employer-Assisted Housing

In some communities, major employers are willing to play a role in providing housing that is affordable for their employees and easily accessible to their place of employment. These forms of employer-assisted housing are most common in high-cost areas and in fields and industries which benefit from a high volume of skilled workers in close proximity to where they work.

Encourage Investments to Support

EHAP – DC currently has an Employer Assisted Housing Program (EHAP) that enables employers to provide workers with downpayment assistance. The panel recommends the District work with major employers to invest in housing their workforce. Potential programs could involve a pool of many employers to support economies of scale. The panel identified two models from other jurisdictions for the District to consider, including Illinois Employer Assisted Housing Fund and the Oregon’s Agriculture Worker Tax Credit.

Housing Benefits for Employees Who Rent

– Employers can play an important role to ensure that students and early career professionals can afford to live in places that are near work, transit and amenities. The panel recommends the District considered ways to encourage employers to provide this kind of support to renters, such as the NYC Housing Support Program to help attach and retain STEM teachers. In addition to

financial support the District could work with employers to negotiate rent deals with selected housing providers, provide technical assistance to employees who are struggling to find or secure housing. If employers prefer not to administer these benefits themselves, they can partner with a nonprofit housing assistance organization to administer the program.

The Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program

The Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit (IAHTC), also known as the Donations Tax Credit, provides a 50-cent state income tax credit to employers for each dollar they contribute to a qualified affordable housing project. Donations, which may be cash, securities, or real or personal property, must total at least \$10,000 and may be aggregated. Sponsors of the residential projects receiving the donations must be non-profit organizations with a mission to construct or rehabilitate affordable housing. Funds must be used for projects that meet the definition of affordable housing. Qualified projects must include units that benefit families who earn up to 60 percent of area median income. Eligible projects include:

- Affordable rental and homeownership developments
- Employer-assisted housing projects
- Homeownership counseling programs in Chicago⁹

Housing Benefits for Employees Ready to Buy – Most EAH programs are designed to help employees to purchase homes, rather than rental assistance. The Metropolitan Planning Council in Chicago and Cook County pairs employers with nonprofit housing counseling partners to design and administer programs that offer credit counseling, home purchase assistance and

Oregon’s Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credit

Oregon’s Agriculture Workforce Housing Tax Credit (AWHTC) Program provides a state income tax credit to investors who incur costs to construct, install, acquire, or rehabilitate agriculture workforce housing. The tax credit may be taken on 50% of the eligible costs actually paid or incurred to complete a farmworker housing project. The total amount of available credits for each biennium is \$16.75 million. There is a set-aside for on-farm projects of \$1.675 per year. One-hundred percent of the credit may be transferred to a contributor to the project.¹⁰

⁹ <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/doh/provdrs/developers/svcs/illinois-affordable-housing-tax-credits-donations-tax-credit.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/development/pages/agriculture-workforce-housing.aspx#:~:text=Agriculture%20Workforce%20Housing%20Tax%20Credit>

access to supportive financial products. More than 65 public, private and nonprofit employers participate in the program. Another example is the Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors Foundation, who uses donations from foundations, individuals and corporations to fund second mortgages

New York City was struggling to find STEM teachers for middle and high schools, so they created the NYC Housing Support Program to attract experienced, certified teachers in these fields. Teachers accepted into the program receive housing support of approximately \$15,000 over two years in exchange for a three-year commitment to teach in designated schools. During the first two years of that commitment, they would receive a monthly housing stipend of \$400 per month. In addition, selected applicants are eligible for an initial payment of up to \$5,000 to cover:

- Relocation expenses,
 - Down-payment on a mortgage.
 - Initial fees associated with rentals,
 - Current mortgage or rental payments.
- And
- Other appropriate fees as determined by the Office of Recruitment.¹¹

¹¹ <http://teachnycprograms.net/hsp/proginfo.php#:~:text=Successful%20applicants%20will%20receive%20housing,in%20a%20high%20need%20school>

for certain public service employees at zero percent interest.

Stakeholders highlighted currently challenges with the District's EHAP program and encourage the District to modify the programs to make a bigger impact. These modifications include:

- Make the application process more streamlined and user-friendly.
- Improve the program's predictabilities and clarify timelines.
- Consider focusing the EHAP program on the Downtown area—perhaps a “first look” for new downtown for-sale units, or a guarantee for downtown purchases.

There are several ways that the District could partner with employers to encourage them to take the lead on homebuyer assistance. This could include matching employers with nonprofit housing organizations who have experience administering housing assistance programs, providing technical assistance to employers to design programs that fits their needs, or offer tax credits to donors who contribute to funds created by employers and/or matching funds to encourage donors to contribute.¹²



SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

San Mateo Community College

In response to some of the highest housing costs in the country, San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) in San Mateo, California owns and operates 134 units of employee housing, built on land owned by the college. Units are offered to faculty and staff, who qualify as first-time homebuyers. Rents are set at 50 percent of the area medium income, with exemptions available if rent is more than 33 percent of gross household income. Tenants may rent the units for up to five years with the goal that, after that time, residents have been able to save enough for a downpayment on a market rate home in the area.

The housing is owned and operated by the Educational Housing Corporation, which was established by the SMCCCD. The Board of Directors of the Corporation is composed of representatives from the community, the faculty, and the SMCCCD Board of Trustees.

Leverage Other Partners

Business Improvement Districts

(BIDs) – BIDs in the study area are key partners in enhancing and promoting local neighborhoods. They market the neighborhoods in the study area and provide extensive programming to raise visibility and appeal to a wide audience of property owners, retailers, workers and residents both in the neighborhood and beyond. BID representatives among the stakeholders interviewed emphasized their desire to work with the District to promote their neighborhoods to students and early career professionals as attractive places to live, work and play.

DC-Based Universities and Hospitals –

DC-based universities and hospitals are major employers in the District, as well as destinations for students interested in careers in public service. They also hold significant real estate assets and benefit from students and employees living close to campus. These institutions can be high-value partners in any initiative to attract and retain this target demographic to the study area.

Satellite Campuses and Internship Programs

– Each year, thousands of “semester in DC” university students, interns, and fellows come to the District to develop and advance their careers. This demographic has unique housing needs and wants, such as flexible leasing terms or shared common spaces. The panel developed several recommendations for how to leverage this industry and demographics to add housing to Downtown and grow the District’s economy.

Actions for Partnership and Development Models

Short-Term Actions

- Build a coalition of for-profit and nonprofit institutions—colleges and universities, employers, economic development organizations— with a vested interest in increasing the supply of attainable housing in DC’s Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Among other actions, this coalition should:
 - > Develop a shared understanding of current and future housing needs and how these needs balance with their current real estate portfolios and the projected housing supply for DC.
 - > Strongly encourage DC-based academic institutions to place a significant focus on housing when developing campus master plans and to work with the District to ensure their plans are consistent with the DC’s planning and housing production goals.
 - > Evaluate opportunities for members of the coalition, including satellite campuses, to work together to provide housing/classroom facilities for their student programs.
 - > Develop a shared plan to implement recommendations from this TAP report.
- Be proactive and opportunistic in working with GSA to identify surplus properties that could be redeveloped, with particular attention to GSA properties that have the best prospects for conversion to residential uses.
- Assemble a small group of developers, perhaps in partnership with ULI, to review the inventory of DC-owned real estate assets in the study area and assess their prospects for residential development. Reduce the time between unit availability and occupancy by improving the IZ household referral process to minimize burden on both the households and property owners while ensuring program compliance.
- Promote master lease opportunities to DC-base and non-local universities for student and employee housing. For those institutions unwilling or unable to incur the risk of a master lease for an entire building, several institutions could each take a portion of a building to reduce the risk to any one institution.
- Create an inventory of underutilized or surplus government-owned assets in the study area that could be redeveloped as housing for students or early career public service professionals. In addition to describing each property in detail, the inventory should also describe DC and federal programs applicable to each property including who to contact for more information and how to apply for the program.

¹² See Local Housing Solutions website for more information and examples of employer-assisted housing. <https://localhousingolutions.org/housing-policy-library/employer-assisted-housing-programs/>

- Create/Identify a clearinghouse where satellite campuses and summer can share information about housing needs and availability for their students.
- Develop partnerships with student housing operators who know how to operate these assets efficiently.
- Work with the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area (CUWMA) to inventory the underutilized dorm resources, which may be available for summer interns, and coordinate with the universities to see if these resources could be made available.

Medium/Long-Term Actions

- Work with GSA and Congress to create a revolving fund so that the revenue from the disposition of the surplus properties could be used to pay for planning, relocation and other costs related to the disposition. Explore the opportunity for public/private partnerships for redevelopment of these sites.
- Create a mechanism to encourage employers to create private pools of capital—either individually or through a pool with multiple employer/investors—to encourage employers to invest in housing their workforce. Encourages and develops incentives for institutions and organizations to contribute to employee's rent in the study area, either for existing or new housing, or to match any contribution that an employer makes toward rent for their employees who live in the study area.

- Mitigate and reduce regulatory barriers to new development, particularly conversions. This could include additional relief on entitlements, permitting, inclusionary zoning, GAR and TOPA, in connection with the downtown housing abatement, specifically targeted to housing in the study area. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this report.
- Develop a toolbox of potential code waivers that may be useful and can be easily deployed to developers for building conversions in the study area.
- Reconsider regulations for short-term rentals, as they relate to providers for this cohort—particularly students, interns, and fellows—who have a very different impact on the city and its housing needs.
- Work with the CUWMA to orchestrate a master lease—with one or more universities for conversion opportunities. Providing an incentive for a pilot project to demonstrate how such a program could work.
- Partner with student associations to bring together organized groups of the target cohort to explore with them their current and future housing needs.
- Explore with local employers and business organizations the possibility of creating a consortium to develop housing for their early public service career employees. Possible organizational partners include: the

Washington DC Economic Partnership, the DC Chamber of Commerce, or the BIDs and major employers like MedStar Health, FannieMae, Children's National Hospital, and major public policy institutions and universities.

- Work with major employers of public service workforce to consider replicating the concept of Amazon's Housing Equity Fund where employers can contribute to a fund that would provide capital to developers building workforce housing or subsidize rents for early career public service professionals. These investors could get a return on their investment, which may be below market, but a return, nonetheless.
- Collaborate with BIDs to capitalize on their cultural and entertainment programming, in partnership with nearby institutions like the Smithsonian, universities, farmers markets, and festivals. Efforts should focus on making these neighborhoods vibrant for 18-hours a day, attracting workers to live, shop, recreate, and work all in one place.

Legislative & Administrative Solutions

Recommendations in this section build on the goals of DC’s Comeback Plan, which set the goal of adding 15,000 residents to the Downtown in five years. The Office-to-Anything Program includes a 15-year tax abatement to encourage the repositioning of office space into new, activated commercial, entertainment or retail uses. This repositioning requires substantial modification of existing buildings structurally, mechanically and aesthetically. The panel heard from stakeholders who have experience with the program about some of the regulatory and permitting challenges they have faced with such conversions and suggestions for how to streamline the process. Recommendations for these regulatory changes are included here.

Office-to-Residential Conversions

The District places a high priority on office-to-residential conversions, especially for properties in the study area. These conversions are challenging, and often expensive, for many reasons. Several of the panelist have experience with these types of projects and proposed the following regulatory changes to expedite and reduce costs, perhaps in exchange for including moderate priced units.

Window Requirements

DC’s inclusionary zoning program is designed to increase the supply of smaller, more affordable units across the city, particularly in higher-cost areas close to transit. However, some requirements for IZ units are difficult to accommodate in converted residential buildings. For example, units with windowless bedrooms do not qualify as inclusionary zoning units. Many of the conversion projects have “in-board” bedrooms—sometimes as many as 75 percent of the units—which also makes them ineligible as IZ units.

The DC requirement for operable windows in all residential units is a challenge in buildings converted to residences from other uses. Most office buildings do not have operable windows. Most neighboring jurisdictions do

not have this requirement. It would reduce construction costs for developers if some conversion projects were able to retain some of the existing windows in the study area, particularly if more moderate priced units were included. The requirement for both natural and mechanical ventilation should be reviewed in favor of the original BIC language.

One cited example was a recently adopted requirement for bird resistant glass that added an estimated half million dollars to the cost of the project shown below. This additional cost is emblematic of other disincentives to conversion.

Green Building Code and Stormwater Management (SWM)

The panel identified several revisions to DC’s Green Building and Stormwater Management Code, which could expedite residential development in the Downtown area. Although these regulations are relaxed for conversions, there are other steps that could be helpful. For example, DOEE could give points for operational and embodied carbon savings, material conservation and reduced waste while also allowing for alternative compliance options to provide more flexibility in how requirements are met. The city should also consider providing more flexibility in how developers can meet DOEE requirements for SWM and the Green Area Ratios (GAR). For example, some SWM components—bio-retention, green roofs, and permeable pavements—should count toward meeting minimum GAR requirements while other



1133 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC.

components which are not currently counted at all—such as existing tree preservation and new landscaping—should count toward the GAR. The GAR requirement varies based on the zoning designation of the property. The city should consider creating a category for conversions with more flexibility to meet GAR, allowing developers to apply SWM solutions to meet the GAR requirements and performance-based solutions to meet other DOEE requirements.

Tax Abatements for Conversions

The tax abatements intended to reduce the cost of conversions are attractive and helpful to developers, as every incentive is. The city should consider expanding them to more of the Downtown, especially around the surplus GSA properties, where there is currently little housing.

Process Improvements and Streamlining

Project Coordinator

An additional suggestion from the panel was to consider creating a project coordinator within District government who could shepherd these conversion projects through the review and approval process. This individual would help resolve conflicts or mixed messages among agencies and help clarify any questions or issues as they arise.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Process

The BZA approval process and public input are an essential part of that process. But,

depending on the complexity of the project, the process can add years to a project, create uncertainty and add substantial costs. While this applies to development projects

across the city, it is especially relevant for infill and conversion projects in the study area where costs are particularly high and the impact of some of the changes on

Arlington County Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative (CMRI)¹³

Arlington County, Virginia created the Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative (CMRI) to “...modernize Arlington’s regulations, practices and processes to ensure a more nimble response to economic shifts. By removing regulatory barriers and constraints, the County seeks to enable market-based solutions to address the commercial building supply, specifically repositioning and converting obsolete inventory.” The CMRI is an example of a proactive approach to expedite conversion of office buildings to alternative uses, including residential. In November 2024, the Council amended the zoning ordinance, adding a new category entitled Adaptive Reuse Amendment for the special exception site plan amendment process intended for repurposing outdated office space into new uses.

The purpose of the amendment is to streamline these entitlements in a comparatively faster and less expensive manner, to expedite conversion into vibrant, multi-use spaces. It will serve as a “test case” for broader regulatory reform. In November of 2024, the County Council launched Phase 2.0 of the CMRI, which will focus on office conversion, repositioning, redevelopment,



YARDI MATRIX

The 315,000-square-foot office building at 2200 Crystal Drive could transform into a multifamily community of some 200 units.

tenant support, and placemaking. Studies scheduled for completion in 2025, which will inform additional amendments include, among other topics, major/minor site plan amendments and administrative changes and live/work flexibility.¹⁴

¹³ <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Community-Planning-Housing-Development/Commercial-Market-Resiliency>

¹⁴ A detailed explanation of the intent of the Commercial Market Resiliency Initiative can be found in the [County Board Policy on the Transformation of Commercial Office Buildings in Arlington](#) can be found in the policy document, adopted by the County Board on November 16, 2024

the surrounding community may be more limited. For example, would it be possible to eliminate public consultation for uses or changes, which do not affect the public—roof amenities or minor setback projections (e.g. elevator/stair cores). The District should examine this review process to see if there are ways to reduce the number of items that require BZA approval—especially for projects in the study area, which have the potential to add units affordable to the target population—thereby shortening the review and approval period, providing more certainty on how long it will take and, potentially reducing costs.

Process Transparency

The more transparent and easier to follow the permitting and approval process is, the less time it takes. Because time is money for a developer, those savings can help to keep rents lower. Panelists identified at least five agencies that they must deal with as they go through the planning and development process. While each agency’s approval process is clear and well-defined, they are not well coordinated across agencies. Once a developer has their approvals from one agency and is ready to move forward, sometimes the approvals from another agency need to be extended, which adds more time and uncertainty to the process. Long-time participants in the DC development process may understand how to navigate the review and approval process but, for new entrants, it can be extremely difficult to manage the several unrelated permitting

processes so that the timing aligns. Some jurisdictions prepare an overall process flowchart that shows the interdependence among the different permitting processes and plans, explains each of them and coordinates the timeframes. This is extremely helpful for investors, developers, and administrators so that everyone is on the same page with regard to the review and approval. DC could consider a pilot project for the study area to expedite the review and approval process for projects in this high priority area.

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA)

Stakeholders and panelists flagged TOPA as a barrier to increasing the supply of housing. TOPA can increase the uncertainty of the project, including extending the development timeline for up to eight months. Especially relevant for the target demographic, when negotiations between landlord and tenant include affordable rents, these rents often do not apply to new tenants, which often includes students or early career professionals.

Zoning Policy Revisions

Accessory Apartment Policy Modifications

The District should explore ways to adapt its policies related to Accessory Apartments (also known as “Accessory Dwelling Units” or ADUs) to expand the housing supply in lower-density residential areas adjacent to Downtown DC. Policy revisions could include increasing the number of allowable



A typical ADU positioning on a single-family lot

accessory apartments from one to two or more, reconsidering ownership requirements, or modifying on-site parking requirements. These smaller units are ideal for a student or early-career professional looking for smaller, more moderately priced housing.

Longer-Term Zoning Reform

Many jurisdictions have eliminated single-family zoning, particularly in transit-oriented areas. By allowing up to four units by right in single-family zones, the District could reduce the time spent in discretionary review processes instead using building guidelines to encourage compatible development of multi-family units. While the study area for this TAP does not contain many single-family zone so the impact of these changes would not significantly impact the study area, they would help increase supply District-wide.

DC 2050 - the District’s Upcoming Comprehensive Plan Rewrite

DC 2050 presents a unique opportunity to emphasize the importance of increasing the housing supply in the Downtown and

adjacent neighborhoods for this cluster. The Plan should include a downtown housing element that includes objectives and strategies to attract more students and early-career public interest professionals to the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, as well as strategies for increasing the supply at rents and prices these segments of the market can afford.

Actions for Legislative and Administrative Solutions

Short-Term Actions

- Review the impact of TOPA over the years and consider revisions to ensure that the program’s impact on housing supply and affordability is well balanced with the original purposes of the program. Through the District’s DC 2050 Comprehensive Plan process, evaluate ways to increase housing production Downtown through traditional or “matter of right” development processes, particularly for housing types that are affordable to students and early career professionals.
- Draft regulatory changes suggested by the panel to make office-to-residential conversion as easy as possible, including adjusting requirements for inclusionary zoning units, window requirements, green area ratio, and stormwater management.
- Update TOPA requirements in the study area—perhaps as a pilot—to ensure

that tenant interests are protected and affordability for the target market optimized. These revisions should also take the needs of Downtown viability into consideration.

- Expand the EAHP program to include additional employers, renters in addition to homebuyers, and a preference for Downtown and adjacent neighborhood locations.

Medium-Term Actions

- Hold a focus group to set the groundwork for a downtown housing element and strategies in the DC 2025 Comprehensive Plan to elevate the priority of housing and affordability in the Downtown.
- Investigate employer-assisted housing investment tools. Research should include an assessment of the market for philanthropic, corporate, and individual investors and discuss various implementation options, such as pooled fund vs. project-based investment. The Panel identified that the District could empower additional employers to create employer-assisted housing programs to supplement the options available to

public service employees.

Long-Term Actions

- Move forward with regulatory and zoning reforms described above that will make it easier and less expensive to add to the affordable housing supply in the study area.

Balanced Neighborhoods—Diverse Housing Types

The panel’s recommendations in this section of the report emphasize the importance of quality neighborhoods and diverse housing types for students and young professionals pursuing careers in public service. Housing targeted to students and young professionals are likely to be small and developments compact due to high land and construction costs in Downtown DC. For this reason, housing design and neighborhood amenities are especially important to make these units attractive and practical. The diagram below demonstrates that when there are more units on a given parcel and a wider variety of housing types, the cost per unit is lower and therefore more if they are accessible to the target demographic.



The Common Realm

Shared Amenities

This target demographic look for amenities look to the common realm to provide spaces to gather, relax, study, and play. The diagram below suggests where these types of amenities are ideally provided—in public spaces or semi-private spaces on-site. In the urban core, where land is scarce and densities higher, they tend to be provided in public spaces like parks, restaurants and coffee shops, and recreation centers. In lower intensity, adjacent neighborhoods, developers are more likely to provide these amenities on-site for the shared use of their residents. In both cases, a context-sensitive urban fabric is an important feature to attract and retain residents.

Below are the panel’s recommendations for common realm amenities to attract students and entry-level professionals with modest incomes to the Downtown and adjacent

neighborhoods and what the District can do to enhance these amenities.

In addition to less space, affordability typically means fewer amenities inside the units. In these locations, the public spaces should offer more amenities—in indoor and outdoor spaces for gathering, recreation, and entertainment—to have the highest appeal. In adjacent neighborhoods, where there may be more space and amenities within the building, amenities outside the project, like “third spaces” for virtual work and meeting-ups, could be more limited.

Downtown DC has many “third spaces” and can build upon these to attract more students and early-career professional to live in these neighborhoods. Farmer’s markets, active recreation areas, parks and open spaces should all be maintained, enhanced and marketed to promote Downtown DC and urban neighborhoods to students and

young professionals. In addition, the “spaces in between” activity centers should be improved. This could include filling vacant ground floor spaces and activating pocket parks to create “curb appeal” in Downtown DC neighborhoods. DC should identify existing and new sources of funding to investing in this kind of infrastructure to make these neighborhoods more appealing to students and young professionals.

Great Streets

The District can also take steps to activate ground floor spaces and increase the synergy between indoor and outdoor private spaces and public streetscapes? DC could encourage or mandated amenities like outdoor seating, attractive signage, movable glass wall systems (nanowalls), outdoor dining, play areas or connections between interior courts and other semi-private spaces and the public streets. Other options are community uses like farmers’ markets, art exhibits and installations, street fairs, concerts and other

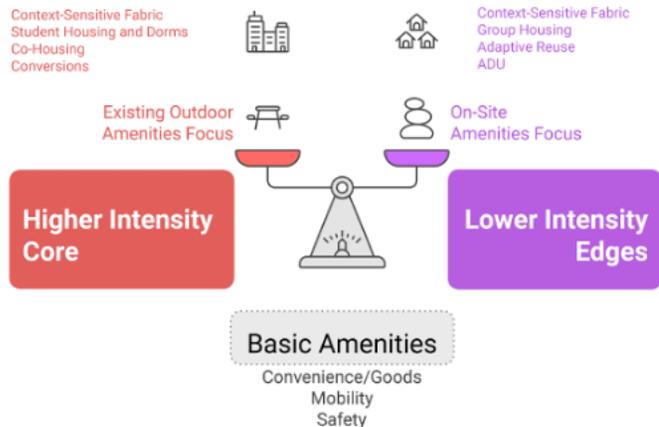


DIAGRAM BY ULI



Movie night in Franklin Park, DC



Franklin Park, DC



FLORIAN GROEHN, ASPECT STUDIOS

The Goods Line in Sydney, Australia - an example of a multifunctional space for social interaction and many types of gatherings.



BEN SCHUMIN, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Bus 4103, a 1995 Flxible Metro-E, traveling west through Dupont Circle while doing the G2 route. Photo taken in 2005.

types of performances. All of these create an inviting atmosphere of safety, vibrancy that appeal to this demographic who are looking for places to study, meet, eat, and exercise at all hours.

Mobility, Convenience, Safety

In addition to the amenities described above, mobility, convenience, and safety are essential to attract and retain students and entry-level career professionals. The diagram and narrative below give specifics for each of these characteristics.

Mobility – Residents in the Downtown and close in neighborhoods must have a range of transportation options to move easily across Downtown and throughout the region. Many of these urban dwellers have modest disposable incomes so prefer to live car-free. Safe, convenient transit—whether by Metro train or bus, bicycle or on foot—is essential to meet everyday needs like grocery shopping and service retail and to reach work and leisure activities easily and safely. While the DC region has a world-class transit system, there is still

room for improvement. Metro sometimes has long headways, especially in the evening, buses are often under used and unappreciated by this group and bike lanes, while increasing, often go unused because many are blocked by vehicles or unprotected. unprotected.

Feeling Safe – Safety, and the perception of safety, is a high priority for anyone who lives in the Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods. Currently, some pedestrian paths do not feel safe or welcoming because they are not well lit or have continuous sidewalks.

Convenience – Convenience is a high priority for the target demographic. They look for a range of good and services, preferably on along their route between work or school and home. These include healthy and affordable groceries— whether in large format stores, specialty food shops, or small bodegas, pharmacies, “fast casual” takeout and moderately priced restaurants, and clothing stores, as well as a variety of entertainment options, all within their budget.

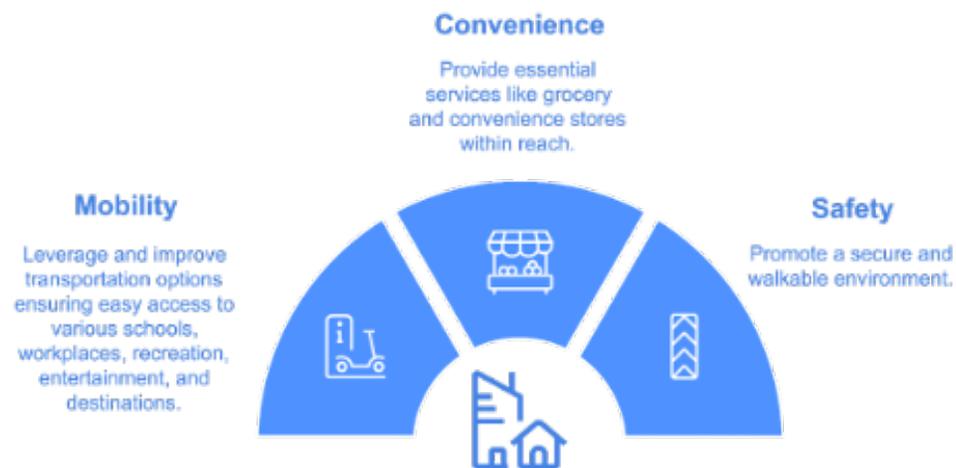


DIAGRAM BY ULI

Examples from Outside the DC Area

The panel offered two urban neighborhoods as examples of places that have both the density and diversity needed to attract this cohort. In both cases, redevelopment began with the historic urban fabric and then became denser and more diverse to include a wider range of housing types, including units that are designed for and affordable to students and early career professionals. These examples are described briefly here.

Boston Back Bay

Once an exclusive neighborhood of luxury Victorian townhomes, Back Bay is now home to a mix of cultural and religious institutions, office skyscrapers, high-end shops and hotels, and a diversity of housing types. The neighborhood is also walking distance from several post-secondary academic institutions, including Boston University, Emerson College and the Berklee College of Music, and a short

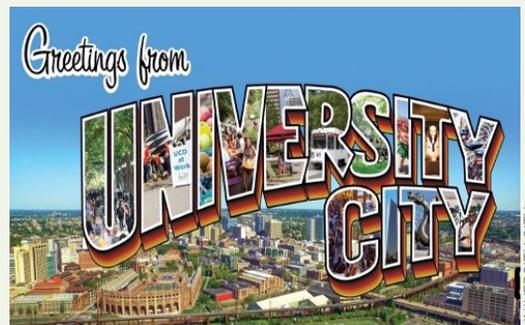


Back Bay, Boston, MA

transit ride away from many more. Although it is a high-end neighborhood, because of this diversity, Back Bay is home to almost 1,000 students. A dense urban fabric, a variety of housing types—multi-unit townhouses, mid-rise and high-rise residential buildings—a sense of security and easy access to transit, retail and other services make this possible

University City District, Philadelphia

University City District (UCD) was created in 1997, through a partnership between University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, small businesses, and residents in what was a blighted neighborhood surrounding these academic institutions. UCD's mission is to revitalize the area using "...a place-based, data-driven framework to invest in world-class public spaces, address crime and public safety, support small businesses along our commercial corridors, connect



low-income Philadelphians to careers with employer partners, and promote job growth and innovation.”¹⁵ UCD's work focuses on transforming public spaces, programming, economic development and maintaining clean and safe streets.

Each year, the University of Pennsylvania publishes The State of University City 2023, which documents the district's status as a regional leader in innovation and development and provides an in-depth guide to 50 development projects—academic, commercial, public and residential space, and more—that continue to transform University City, and other economic development indicators. According to the report, “The confluence of students...led to 12% of University City residents having moved to the neighborhood from another state in 2021, compared to just 3% citywide. The current population is up by over 9% over 2010 figures, and additional housing options currently under construction will likely lead to further increases.”¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.universitycity.org/about>

¹⁶ <https://almanac.upenn.edu/articles/university-city-district-2023-state-of-university-city-report>

DC's Urban Fabric

The panel highlighted two neighborhoods within the study area as examples of places with a high-quality public realm—Penn West and Downtown East.

Penn West – Penn West is the neighborhood at the center of downtown DC, centered along Pennsylvania Avenue west of the White House. The neighborhood is the focus of several partnerships to revitalize the corridor. These partnerships—all of which include the Golden Triangle BID—include PA2024, Penn Ave West streetscape project, and Penn West Equity and an Innovation District. Together, they have an ambitious agenda to bring business, jobs, street improvements, communications technology upgrades and increased multi-modal activity to the area. The panel noted a streetscape project led by the District Department of

Transportation (DDOT) to improve travel for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic along Pennsylvania Avenue, west of the White House. Residential sections of the neighborhood still have much of the original, finer-grained, smaller scale urban fabric. With so much focus on revitalizing the corridor and the proximity of many key institutions, including George Washington University and Hospital and multiple federal agencies, these areas have the potential to follow the examples in Boston and Philadelphia by becoming moderately denser, with increased diversity of housing types.

Downtown East—The vision for Capital Crossing in Downtown East is a good example of what is possible as new urban neighborhoods are developed in the Downtown. This 2.1 million square foot development over the freeway will add

trophy-class office space, a new hotel, and destination retail on ground floors. The development will connect F and G Streets to 2nd Street with shared-use and predominately pedestrian corridors. The development will also include a public plaza along at the Massachusetts Avenue entrance, lining up with a possible future park to the north and weaving south between glass and steel high rises. This transition to denser and more diverse residential areas is already underway in the Downtown East neighborhood where new higher density/larger-scale buildings are beginning to emerge among the existing smaller scale housing stock.

Housing Types

Student-Oriented Housing

The panel was asked to identify the types of housing that DC should seek to add to the study area to attract and retain post-secondary students and early career professionals. The type of housing best suited for any particular site will depend on the target resident and the partner organization.

Group Homes – The first type of student-oriented housing is naturally-occurring, privately-owned group houses. Group homes are generally smaller than multi-unit building, with several bedrooms and one common area and kitchen. Most often individually owned and managed they are leased through word-of-mouth or social networks. They are an important segment of the housing market because they are affordable to students, part of the existing stock and tend to remain in the rental market over a long period of time.

Purpose-Built Housing – This type of housing is typically higher densities, built by a regional or national housing developer who understands how to program and manage larger communities with small private spaces and shared common areas. These units may be located on sites owned by a university or employer and are often more affordable to students or early-career professionals because of the smaller private spaces.

Academic Institution-Supported Housing – These residences are often provided through public-private partnerships in which local universities leverage their land assets to partner with private developers to provide new long-term housing for faculty and staff. Most often, these residences are built on vacant or recycled land on campus; but, in some cases, universities own or acquire remote sites. Upon completion, these projects can be owned and managed as part of the university’s portfolio or managed by a third-party with expertise in this area.

Limited Private Space—Shared Common Space

High Density Multi-Family Housing – One of the best ways to achieve affordability in areas where land costs are high is to offer less rentable private space, enhanced with shared amenities in the common realm.

The image on the left above shows how these higher-density buildings can be integrated into the existing urban fabric. The image on the right shows how public realm amenities can be integrated vertically—from street level to the roof—to take full advantage of land that sells at a premium. The two images below show exemplary floor plans of units incorporating four bedrooms into a unit of less than 1500 square feet.



The Envoy Rowhouses - 2400 16th St NW, Washington, DC



NILES BOLTON ASSOCIATES



NILES BOLTON ASSOCIATES

Examples of high density residential development in Atlanta, GA with limited private space but shared common space. Project: Inspire Atlanta by Niles Bolton Associates



NILES BOLTON ASSOCIATES

A sample mixed-use development that employs a cost-effective construction method of wood frame over a concrete podium. Project: Trellis House by Niles Bolton Associates, Washington, DC.

Mid-Density/Alternative Construction – Another type of housing for this demographic is market-rate units with slightly more private space, still with amenity-rich common spaces. Below is an example of this format, owned by Howard University, that includes units with windowless rooms marketed as dens, but which could also serve as “borrowed” bedrooms—all in a space of about 800 square feet. These borrowed bedrooms work well for some of the office-to-residential conversion buildings that have deeper floor plates. The builder of this building used an alternative construction method—wood frame on top of a concrete podium, helping to lower costs and contributing to affordability of the units.



NILES BOLTON ASSOCIATES

A sample floor plan of a market-rate unit with a “borrowed” bedroom highlighted.

Pre-Approved Designs – The panel strongly recommends that the District adopt pre-approved prototype architectural designs or blueprints of high-density housing typologies that have already been vetted by the and Office of Zoning and the Department of Buildings. There is precedence in other markets for this approach, which is advocated by organizations from the National Association of Home Builders¹⁷ to the Congress of New Urbanism¹⁸. Pre-approved designs have worked in other communities to expedite housing development in high-priority locations for target markets and could be effective for encouraging high-density infill in Downtown DC and adjacent neighborhoods.

¹⁷ NAHB.org

¹⁸ CNU.org



D1
4 Bed | 4 Bath | 1350 SQFT



D2
4 Bed | 2 Bath | 1082 SQFT

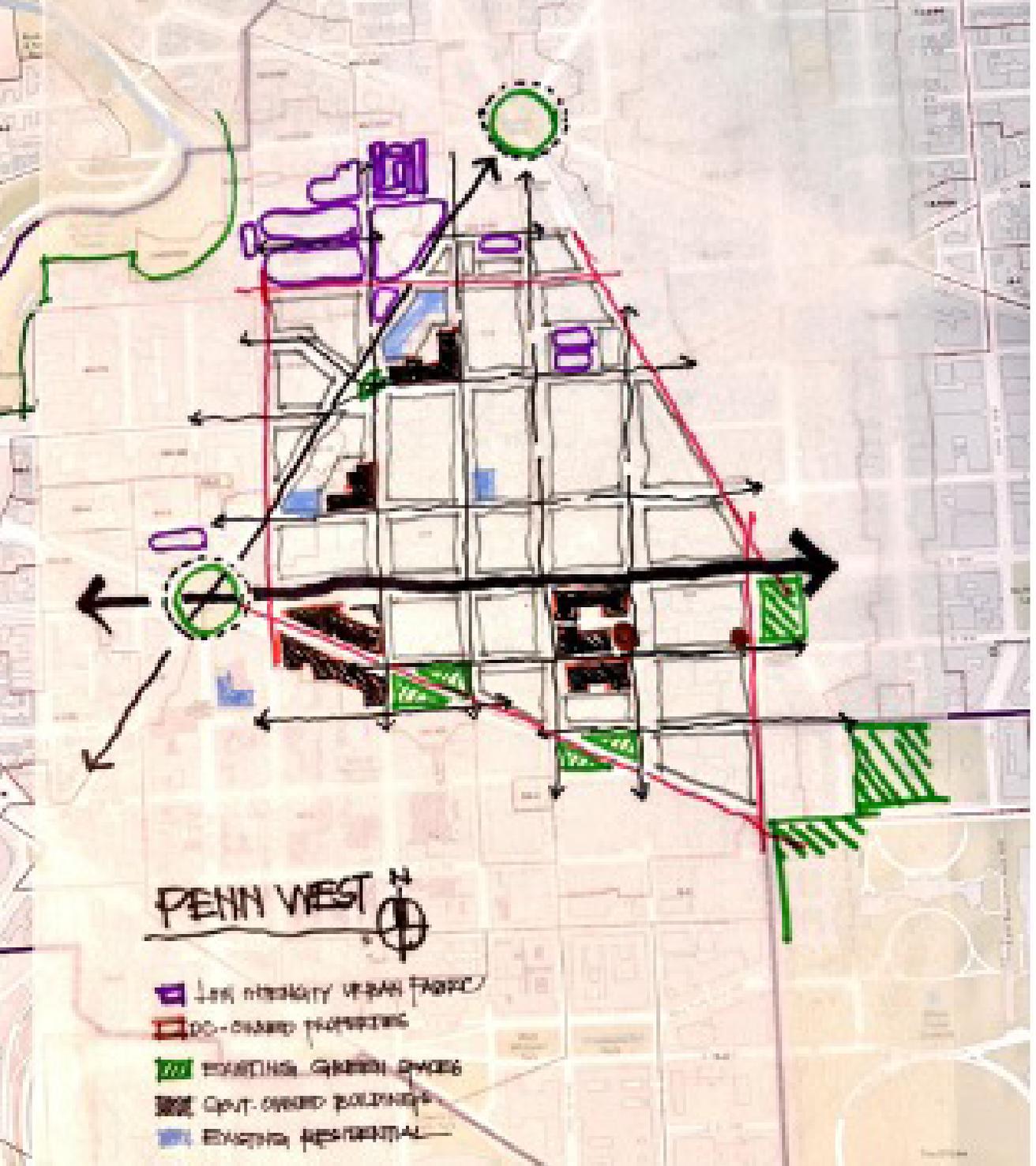
NILES BOLTON ASSOCIATES

Examples of pre-approved designs

Density and Diversity in DC's Urban Fabric

The panel made recommendations for how the housing types described above could be integrated into the existing urban fabric in Penn West and Downtown East neighborhoods as examples.

The diagram on the left of the **Penn West** neighborhood shows existing low-density housing stock in purple, just outside the study area. These properties could complement more intensive residential development in the study area and benefit from any new neighborhood retail or services that are added to support the new residents. The black boxes, outlined in orange are publicly-owned buildings—either the District or GSA—which could be developed as higher intensity residential units, possibly with commercial uses on the first floor. These properties are near Metro stops and/or are along major corridors.

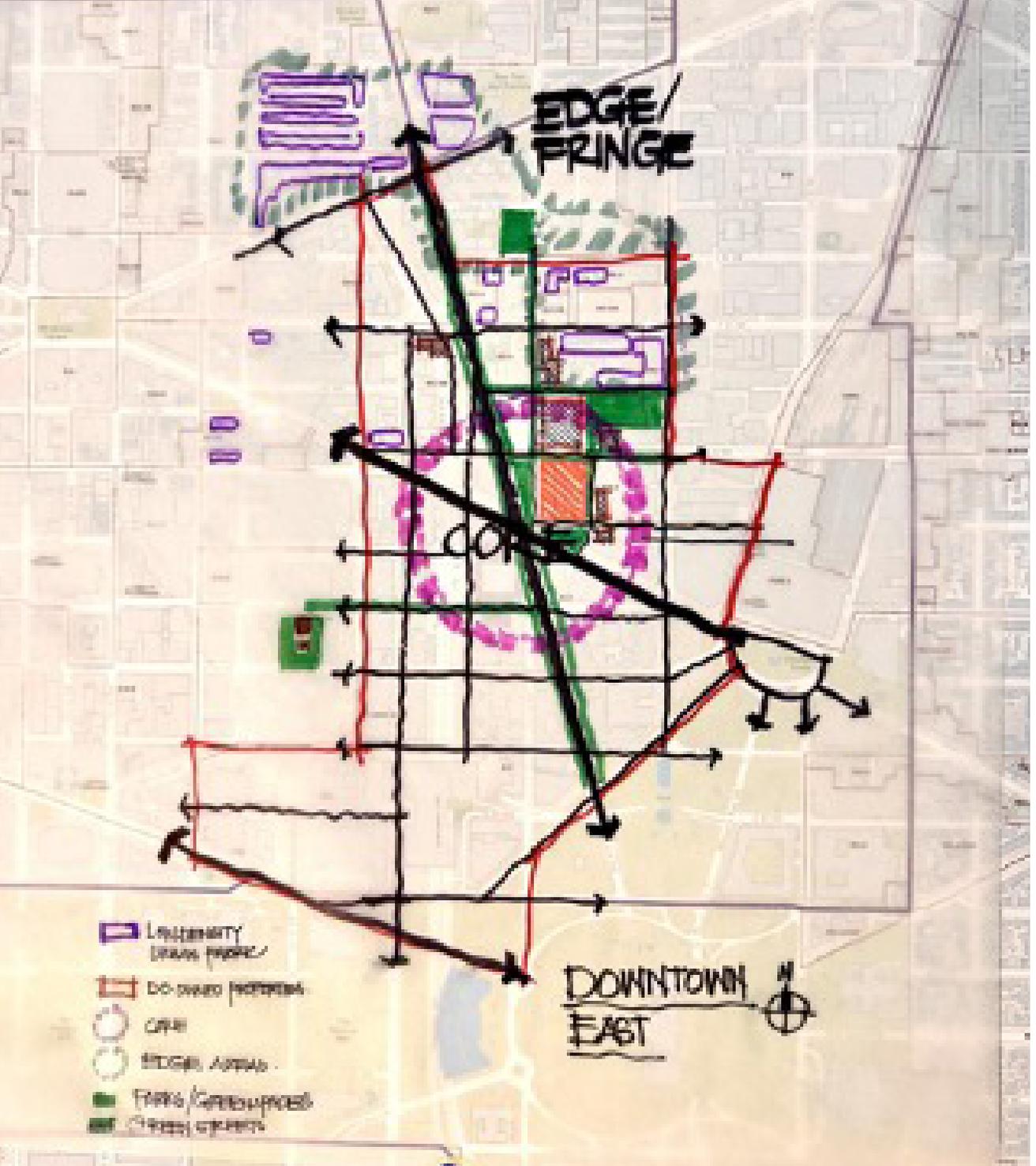


PENN WEST

- Less Intensity Urban Fabric
- DC-owned Properties
- ▨ Boarding Green Spaces
- Govt-owned Buildings
- Existing Residential

Penn West

111



Downtown East

In this diagram of **Downtown East**, the red square in the center is a surface parking lot surrounded by government buildings. As this neighborhood evolves to meet the goals of the Downtown Action Plan, this offers a major opportunity for adding dense and diverse residential units to this area that is easily accessible to public service sector jobs and academic institutions.

The green spaces in both of these diagrams show the open spaces that already exist in both areas, representing the benefits that already exist in the two neighborhoods that could be linked together to help attract new residents.

Conclusion

The purpose of the TAP was to recommend housing and economic development strategies, focused on Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods, which the District can adopt to support economic development, strengthening the workforce pipeline for the DC's largest industry—the public service cluster. This sector powers the region's economy, and includes the federal government, the District and local governments, international organizations, and nonprofits.

The District faces both opportunities and challenges in its efforts to grow the supply of housing in the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Opportunities include an abundance of academic and nonprofit institutions, as well as federal agencies and the U.S. Congress, which offer internships, fellowships and employment to students and entry-level public service professionals. In addition to these, the many parks, entertainment and sports venues, cultural institutions, and excellent transit system contribute to the District's appeal. The District has placed a high priority on attracting more residential development to this area, putting programs in place to encourage developers to build housing in the study area.

The most significant challenge to attracting students and early-career public service professionals to the study area is the high cost and limited supply of housing, affordable to this demographic. A second challenge is the regulatory environment for residential development, especially for conversion from other uses, which can be difficult to navigate, with many obstacles that increase costs and delay the approval process. One stakeholder referred to this challenge as, "... death by a thousand cuts, which need to be reduced to no more than one hundred." Other challenges include the lack of vitality in parts of Downtown, after hours and weekends, and the absence of a coherent marketing strategy to attract this cohort to live in the study area.

To provide a framework and guide for their recommendations, the panel offered four overarching key recommendations. In addition, they prepared an implementation matrix of immediate-, near-, medium-, and long-term actions that the city and its partners should take to accomplish the goals outlined in the introduction of these report. The implementation matrix can be found in Appendix A.

Key Recommendations

The key recommendations below serve as a summary and framework for the more detailed recommendations provided above.

1. **Collaborate** with current and new partners and stakeholders to better understand housing demand for students and early career professionals and **seek out opportunities** to leverage resources outside the DC government.
2. Use new partnerships, revised regulations, and a diversity of housing types to **test concepts and demonstrate new innovative approaches**.
3. **Reform regulations and streamline the approval process** to encourage the development of housing that is affordable for students and early-career professionals.
4. **Create balanced, diverse, mixed-use neighborhoods**, with safety, mobility, and convenience that are rich with amenities designed to appeal to this demographic.

Appendix A: Implementation Matrix

DCOP: DC Office of Planning
DMPED: Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
GSA: General Services Administration

CUWMA: Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area
DOB: DC Department of Buildings
DCOZ: DC Department of Zoning

DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development
WDCEP: Washington DC Economic Partnership

Recommended Action	Phase of Implementation	Responsible Party	Partners/ Stakeholders
Attracting New Satellite Campuses and other ways to leverage DC's Competitive Advantage			
Assemble data on the future supply of and demand for student housing	Short Term	DMPED	Univiersities, Consortia
Identify key buildings/locations/neighborhoods within Downtown DC for pilot projects	Short Term	DMPED	Univiersities, BIDs, Property Owners
Conduct focus groups & surveys of students and early career professionals	Short Term	DCOP	Univiersities, CUWMA
Review recommendations from this TAP that could align with the Downtown Action Plan and DC 2050	Medium Term	DCOP	DMPED
Partner with other organizations to develop a marketing plan and implementation strategy	Medium Term	DMPED	Univiersities, BIDs, WECEP, Events DC
Explore the possibility of creating a consortium to develop housing for early public service career employees.	Long Term	DCOP	Universities/Satellite Campuses, public service employers
Work with major employers of public service workforce to consider replicating the concept of Amazon's Housing Equity Fund	Long Term	DMPED	Local employers and institutions, Amazon, non-profits
Investigate other employer-assisted housing investment tools.	Long Term	DCOP	DHCD
Helping Establish and Support Employer-Funded Housing Programs and other actions for leveraging partnership opportunities			
Build a coalition of for-profit and nonprofit institutions—colleges and universities, employers, economic development organizations— with a vested interest in increasing the supply of attainable housing in DC's Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods	Short Term	DCOP, DMPED	Universities/Satellite Campuses, Hospitals, Large Employers, CUWMA
Encourage DC-based academic institutions to place a significant focus on housing when developing campus master plans	Short Term	DCOP	Universities/satellite campuses
Evaluate opportunities for members of the coalition, including satellite campuses, to work together to provide housing/classroom facilities for their student programs.	Short Term	DCOP	Universities/satellite campuses

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DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development
WDCEP: Washington DC Economic Partnership

Recommendation	Phase of Implementation	Responsible Party	Partners/ Stakeholders
Develop a shared plan to implement recommendations from this TAP report, especially those that align with the Downtown Action Plan and Comprehensive Plan updates	Short Term	DCOP, DMPED	Universities/Satellite Campuses, Hospitals, Large Employers, CUWMA
Collaborate with BIDs to capitalize on their cultural and entertainment programming, in partnership with nearby institutions	Short Term	DCOP, DMPED	DowntownDC BID, SWBID, Capital Riverfront BID
Be proactive and opportunistic in working with GSA to identify surplus properties that could be redeveloped to invogorate further economic development opportunities.	Short Term	DCOP, DMPED	GSA
Create/Identify a clearinghouse where satellite campuses and summer programs can share information about housing needs and availability for their students	Short Term	DHCD	Satellite Campuses, CUWMA
Develop partnerships with student housing operators who know how to operate these assets efficiently	Short Term	DHCD	Universities/Satellite Campuses, CUWMA
Partner with student associations to bring together organized groups of the target demographic to explore with them their current and future housing needs	Medium Term	DCOP	Univiersities
Convene public service sector on EAH benefits beyond DC government	Medium Term	DMPED	BIDs, DHCD
Creating a Master Leasing Pool and other actions for innovative development models			
Promote master lease opportunities to DC-base and non-local universities for student and employee housing.	Short Term	Universities/Satellite Campuses, DCOP	DHCD
Develop a shared understanding of current and future housing needs and how these needs balance with their current real estate portfolios and the projected housing supply	Short Term	DCOP, DMPED	Universities/Satellite Campuses, Hospitals, Large Employers, CUWMA
Orchestrate a master lease with one or more universities for conversion opportunities	Medium Term	DCOP	CUWMA, Universities
Create a revolving fund enabling the revenue from the disposition of the surplus properties to be used toward planning, relocation and other disposition costs. Explore the opportunity for public/private partnerships for redevelopment of these sites	Medium Term	GSA	DCOP, DMPED, Congress
Create a mechanism to encourage employers to create private pools of capital—either individually or through a pool with multiple employer/investors—to invest in housing their workforce.	Medium Term	DMPED	DHCD, BIDs, Investors
Enable GSA-occupied property disposition	Long Term	GSA	DCOP, DMPED, Congress

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DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development
WDCEP: Washington DC Economic Partnership

Recommendation	Phase of Implementation	Responsible Party	Partners/ Stakeholders
Restructuring DC's Policy and Process Framework and other legislative and zoning actions			
Mitigate and reduce regulatory barriers to new development, particularly office-to-residential conversions.	Short Term	DOB	DCOP, DMPED
Study TOPA requirements and its impact in and near downtown to optimize the requirements.	Short Term	DHCD	DMPED, DCOP, DC Council
Expand the EAHP program to include renters as well as homebuyers, and a preference for Downtown and adjacent neighborhood locations.	Short Term	DHCD	DMPED, DC Council, Budget Office
Reduce the time between unit availability and occupancy by improving the IZ household referral process .	Short Term	DMPED	DCOP
Develop a toolbox of potential code waivers that may be useful and can be easily deployed to developers for building conversions in the study area.	Short Term	DMPED	DCOP
Reconsider regulations for short-term rentals for students, interns, and fellows.	Short Term	DMPED	DCOP
Hold a focus group to set the groundwork for a downtown housing element and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan updates.	Medium Term	DCOP	Universities, BIDS, Property Owners, DHCD
Evaluate ways, through DC 2050 process, to increase affordable housing production Downtown through traditional or "matter of right" development processes	Medium Term	DMPED	DHCD, BIDs, Investors
Move forward with other regulatory and zoning reforms that will make it easier and less expensive to add to the affordable housing supply in the study area.	Long Term	DCOZ	DCOP, DMPED
Pre-Approving Designs for Housing Forms and other actions for balanced neighborhoods and housing types			
Support current owners of group housing to maintain existing properties through boosting awareness and expanding offerings.	Short Term	DHCD	DCOP
Adopt pre-approved prototype architectural designs or blueprints of high-density housing typologies that have been vetted by DCOZ	Medium Term	DOB	DCOZ
Convert existing assets to group or single-occupancy denser housing for the target market	Medium Term	DMPED	Private developers
Create new housing for the target market, in partnership with for-profit and not-for-profit developers	Long Term	DMPED	P3 or national housing developer
Focus development on the edges of communities like Penn West and Downtown East to provide diverse housing stock within mixed-use neighborhoods	Long Term	DMPED	P3 or national housing developer

Appendix B: Opportunities and Challenges Heard at Stakeholder Roundtables

Stakeholders who were interviewed identified many specific opportunities and challenges which need to be considered as the District moves forward to implement the recommendations of the panel.

Opportunities

- DC has a strong competitive advantage in attracting and retaining higher education students and public service sector professionals.
- The abundance of academic institutions and non-profits located in DC presents a wealth of opportunities for partnerships to develop and implement various housing strategies.
- DC is rich in amenities that appeal to students and young professionals, including parks and open spaces, entertainment and sports venues, museums, and dozens of cultural institutions.
- As the seat of the federal government, DC hosts a wealth of internships, fellowships, and career advancement opportunities to attract individuals who want a career in public service.
- The region has an excellent public transit system making it easy to live car-free—enabling students and early career professionals with modest incomes to save money.

Challenges

- DC does not have a comprehensive marketing plan to attract more higher education students and early career professionals to live in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. Some prospective students and their parents perceive Downtown DC as unsafe, which may deter them from living in or near Downtown DC.
- Housing costs are too high for many students and early career professionals in the public service sector. While many universities provide housing and financial aid for undergraduates, there are fewer housing options for graduate students, interns, fellows, and entry-level public service workers.
- Much of Downtown DC's public spaces are designed to support office patrons and lack the lively and activated spaces students and young professionals seek. Some stakeholders express that some areas of Downtown DC feel sterile and uninviting.
- Stakeholders reported that some of the District's programs to encourage the development of more housing for students and entry-level public service career professionals are not as effective as they could be and that the District offers few incentives for private and institutional organizations to work with DC to develop and implement housing strategies for students and early career professionals. Some of the programs, like the Employer-Assisted Housing Program (EAHP), can be difficult to navigate. Properties in the study area are not eligible for Tax Abatements for Affordable Housing in High-Needs Areas (HANTA).
- Converting office space in Downtown DC to residential units is difficult and expensive. In most cases, conversion is only economical for luxury housing. DMPED's Housing in Downtown (HID) program, while a valuable development tool, may be insufficient to help many sites overcome structural issues within the current economic climate. Stakeholders mentioned that the competition for tax abatements makes them unpredictable, they are slow to process, and the CFO calculation is not working well.
- Local codes and administrative processes, intended to encourage development of housing downtown—including more affordable units—are often more expensive, difficult and time consuming to follow. Among the challenges stakeholders mentioned are the process for verifying renters eligible for inclusionary zoning units, allowances for maintaining rent-controlled units, landlord/tenant regulations (TOPA and ERPA), the condominium warranty process Green Area Ratio (GAR). As one stakeholder commented, "Death by 1,000 cuts needs to be reduced by at least 100."

Appendix C: List of Stakeholders

Marcel Acosta
National Capital Planning Commission

Kelly Blevins
Georgetown University

Jonathan Bonilla
OSSE

Emilia Calma
D.C. Policy Center

Erika Carter
U.S. Government Services
Administration

Anthony Chang
Silverline Equities / ULI Washington

Martine Combal
JLL

Kaitlin Demonbreun
Mt. Vernon Triangle Community
Improvement District

Angela Dupont
National Capital Planning Commission

Andree Entezari
DMPED

Melanie Gilbert
GSA - Public Buildings Service,
National Capital Region

Ramon Jacobson
LISC DC

Olivia Jovine
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning
& Economic Development

Richard Lake
Roadside Development LLC.

Derrek Niec-Williams
Howard University

Olubunmi Osias,
DC Health

Elizabeth Packer
Golden Triangle Business Improvement
District

Leah Riley
DMPED

Kenyattah Robinson
Mt. Vernon Triangle Community
Improvement District

Michael Sherman
National Capital Planning Commission

Brian Smith
NoMa Business Improvement District

Nick Stabile
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning
& Economic Development

Jamie Weinbaum
Horning

Gerry Widdicombe
DowntownDC Business Improvement
District



About the Panel

Panel Chair



Leila A. Finucane
President & CEO
Victory Housing

Since 2017, Leila Finucane has led Victory Housing, Inc., a regional nonprofit focused on affordable

housing development and the provision of assisted living for seniors, as president and chief executive officer. Victory Housing serves as the housing development arm of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Ms. Finucane, an attorney, has over 25 years of experience in real estate, affordable housing, and community development in the private, nonprofit and government sectors. Prior to Victory Housing, Ms. Finucane worked on network-wide branch transformation efforts and affordable housing and risk mitigation strategies at Capital One in senior manager roles in Market Planning & Execution and Community Development Banking, and as a director at NeighborWorks America, where she led the National Initiatives and Applied Research Division, leading best practices, program innovations and peer networking efforts for the key business lines of the NeighborWorks affiliated members. Before joining NeighborWorks America, Ms. Finucane served as the appointed director of the Department of Housing and Community Development for the District of Columbia (“DHCD”) during the administration of Mayor Fenty, where she led the District’s affordable housing and community development efforts and the local Housing Regulation Administration. Key accomplishments included successful response to the housing crisis of 2008, transformation of the development financing process, integrating

the Housing Regulation Administration in to the DHCD and leading the adoption of the District’s Green Building Act in the area of affordable housing development. Before DHCD, she worked in affordable housing and community development lending and program roles at HSBC Bank USA and Seedco and practiced commercial real estate law at Willkie Farr & Gallagher in New York City. Ms. Finucane holds a Bachelor of Arts in American History and African-American Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and Master of Urban Planning and Juris Doctor degrees from New York University.

Ms. Finucane has received awards and acknowledgements from the DC Building Industry Association, the DC Coalition for Non-profit Housing and Economic Development, the DC Apartment and Office Building Association and MFY Legal Services. She is a member of the New York State Bar and serves on the boards of the National Housing Trust Community Development Loan Fund and LeadingAge Maryland. She also serves on the Housing Development Loan Committee of Volunteers of America National Services.

Panelists



Michael Abrams
Managing Director
Fivesquares
Development

Michael Abrams has over 40 years’ experience in the development and

acquisition of commercial and residential properties throughout the DC Metropolitan area. At Fivesquares Development in DC, he serves as Managing Director and leads the leads the sourcing of new development opportunities.

Beginning as a commercial real estate broker in the early 1980’s while attending law school, he transitioned to a family development business that constructed a number of high-profile including Chevy Chase Plaza (Chevy Chase, DC), 4800 Hampden Lane (Bethesda, MD) and 1750 Old Meadow Road (Tysons, VA). In the early 1990’s he formed Rockledge Realty Partners with a primary focus on the acquisition and development of medical properties, eventually building one of the largest portfolios in the DMV totaling almost 700,000 SF of space. In 2010, he joined Foulger-Pratt Development where he rose to Managing Director for DMV area development acquisitions and was actively involved or led the acquisition and structuring of ventures to include over 1,500 apartment units across DC, self-storage, trophy office, and build-to-rent townhouse communities. He led the firm’s efforts in the conversion of office to residential properties including 1425 NY Avenue and 1133 19th Street totaling over 430 units.

Michael serves as a Commissioner of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Past board engagements include The Corcoran Museum, and CulturalDC.



Maya Brennan
 Chief Housing Officer
 Coalition for Nonprofit
 Housing and Economic
 Development

As Chief Housing Officer at CNHED, Maya develops and advances affordable

housing and homelessness prevention policy priorities and strategies.

Maya’s journey in the affordable housing space began with a role as a tenant-landlord hotline counselor, helping both renters and small rental housing operators understand their rights and chart a path forward during some of life’s scariest moments. Since then, she has dedicated her career to understanding and addressing the challenges she saw her clients face. With a steadfast commitment to equity and a keen understanding of the critical role clean, safe, and accessible affordable housing plays in community sustainability and development, Maya has been a staunch advocate for affordable housing solutions across the housing continuum and across community economic development sectors.

In her previous roles, Maya was instrumental in shaping the Housing Matters movement, advocating for safe and affordable housing as a fundamental necessity. She is active within the Urban Institute, the Urban Land Institute, and the National Housing Conference. She has served as legislative staff to Councilmember Elissa Silverman at the DC Council.

Maya holds an M.S. in Urban Policy Analysis and Management from the New School and a B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John’s College. She is also an active member of the Ward 5 Education Equity Committee and several other notable committees and councils dedicated to social justice and housing.



Sarah Davidson
 Principal
 Insight Property Group

Sarah Davidson is a Principal responsible for leading the acquisition and development process for Insight and for

executing the vision and business plans for numerous company projects. Sarah has significant experience developing complex real estate projects including residential and mix-use assets as well as renovations and adaptive re-use properties.

Prior to joining Insight, Sarah was employed by Freddie Mac where she restructured over \$400 million in troubled multifamily loans located throughout the country and oversaw disposition of a portfolio of REO assets. Prior to her time at Freddie Mac, she spent 10 years as a Vice President at Kettler, a multifamily and land developer in the Washington DC metro area. While with Kettler, Sarah was responsible for multifamily development and mixed-use projects from site selection through disposition. Her portfolio of projects, valued at approximately \$750MM, consisted of more than 3,500 units and 35,000 square feet of retail space.

Sarah’s projects included renovations, affordable housing, mixed-use lifestyle centers, luxury high-rise condominiums and apartments. She led Kettler’s development of Midtown Reston, Midtown North, and Metropolitan at Reston Town Center.

Sarah previously worked as a development manager for a local non-profit housing developer, and for the National Association of Housing Finance Agencies focusing on HUD legislative and regulatory issues.

Sarah earned a B.A. from Yale University and an M.A. from Universite des Sciences Sociales in Toulouse, France.



Sukirti Ghosh
 Regional Partner
 Rhodeside & Harwell
 (RHI)

In a career that spans continents, sectors, and diverse contexts and scales of design,

Sukirti’s work is driven and united by his passion for urban life, “people places,” and research-informed design. Trained as an architect in his native India, Sukirti has since devoted his career to planning and urban design, as both a public sector planner and private sector consultant. His work is grounded in his belief that learning is a lifelong endeavor, and that a successful planning and design process must begin with understanding—and learning from—the people and particular context of each place. He has managed diverse and award-winning projects, ranging from citywide comprehensive plans, downtown and corridor plans, and transit-oriented development strategies, to design guidelines, streetscape master plans, site redevelopment, and architectural design. In particular, much of his work has explored the intersection between physical design interventions and economic development strategies for rejuvenating cities, towns and urban districts.

Trained in both architecture and planning, Sukirti excels at making connections between micro-level design details and broader, multidisciplinary considerations at the neighborhood, city and regional scales. Whether he is preparing sketches and 3D visualizations to communicate urban design visions, or producing oil paintings, watercolor renderings and graphic designs in his spare time, his graphics are infused with a visual artist’s perspective. A regular participant in design competitions, Sukirti has received a number of honors in such competitions in recent years.



Marta Goldsmith
Principal
MVG Consulting

Ms. Goldsmith has more than 30 years of experience—across the U.S. and abroad—in planning and zoning,

housing affordability, nonprofit management, and equitable development. She has worked with leaders at all levels of government and in the private real estate development sector. Her expertise includes project management, research and writing, stakeholder engagement, teaching, presentations, and nonprofit leadership.

From January of 2016 – June of 2022, Ms. Goldsmith served as the Executive Director of the Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI). Prior to joining Smart Growth America (2016 – 2018), Ms. Goldsmith was Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at LRG, Inc. a public affairs and nonprofit management firm. She has held positions as Senior Adviser to the Commissioner of the U.S. Public Buildings Service at GSA, the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), and the Urban Land Institute. During her more than 20-year tenure at ULI, she led a wide range of programs, including land use policy research and publications, advisory services, community outreach, international programs, and development. Earlier in her career, Ms. Goldsmith served as Executive Director of the Southern Governors Association and as Special Assistant to the Governor of Florida, covering community and economic development, housing, and transportation issues in the Florida-Washington Office.

Marta was awarded a W.K. Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship and has held teaching positions at Harvard University and the University of Virginia.



Lily Goldstein
Vice President
LEO Impact Capital

Lily Goldstein leads portfolio management, investor relations, capital raising, and external affairs & public

policy for the LEO Impact Capital platform, where she manages the relationships for both internal and external stakeholders, as well as public policy that affects the affordable housing industry. Prior to joining the LEO team, she was the head of JBG’s Opportunity Fund Investor Relations and continues part-time in that role today as the Opportunity Funds wind down. Prior to JBG, Lily was an analyst at The Carlyle Group focused on fund management for the Real Asset funds and she started her career with Crowell & Moring LLP in the Financial Planning & Analysis group. Lily is on the Executive Board for the DC Real Estate Group, the Leadership Council for the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance (NVAHA) and the Board of Directors for Yachad DC, an affordable housing non-profit. Lily received her B.B.A. with high distinction in Finance and Economics from The George Washington University.



Sylke Knuppel
Civil Engineer
Kimley-Horn

Leading the Kimley-Horn Montgomery County land development services, Sylke Knuppel has

successfully delivered residential, mixed-use, senior-housing, retail, and urban redevelopment projects across the DMV. Passionate about designing and building communities and homes, have been involved in the building industry since the age of 15.

Recently served as the 2024 President of the Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), participating on the Executive Committee and State Legislative Committee, and a current member of the ULI Housing Council for ULI DC. As a stakeholder, have testified on legislation related to housing and housing production, entitlement and permitting streamlining, affordable housing, land use regulations, and tax and fee legislation. Have extensive engineering design, entitlement, land and homebuilding operations, and project management experience in many DMV jurisdictions. I see diverse housing solutions for a wide demographic as a necessity for a strong regional economy.

A licensed engineer in the State of Maryland, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University with a Bachelor’s and Master’s in Civil Engineering as well as a Master’s in Real Estate from the University of Maryland.



Toby Millman
Regional Partner
Transwestern
Development
Company

Toby Millman is Regional Partner for Transwestern Development Company

and is based in Washington, DC. He is responsible for overseeing and directing the company’s development pipeline in the Mid-Atlantic region. CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Over his nearly 30-year career, Toby has been involved with the development of over 15 million square feet of residential, office, and retail space. Prior to joining Transwestern, Toby was most recently Senior Vice President at Brookfield Properties, where he oversaw the development pipeline in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions. Prior to Brookfield, he was Senior Vice President at Vornado Realty Trust, creating and leading the multifamily development group for Vornado’s Washington division. Earlier in his career, Toby also owned and operated Agora Development, a development and homebuilding company, and worked for Washington-area developers EYA and Abdo Development.

Toby’s professional affiliations and recognitions include the following:

- DC Building Industry Association (DCBIA) - Vice President of the Board
- DC History Center – Board of Trustees
- Urban Land Institute
- Cornell Real Estate Council

Toby earned an undergraduate degree from Cornell University and a master’s degree in city and regional planning from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Dennis Perkins
CEO
CIVITAS Commercial
Real Estate

Dennis Perkins, CEO of CIVITAS, offers 30+ years of expertise in real estate advisory and brokerage.

His clients include municipalities, corporations, nonprofits, and educational institutions. He provides agency representation to real estate asset management companies, owner-operators, and owner-occupiers as well as consulting services to national and local developers.

He’s a Trustee of the Federal City Council, a member of the Urban Land Institute, and co-founder of CIVITAS Bedrock, a brokerage and finance firm focused on educational institutions. Mr. Perkins is also a dedicated community advocate, serving on multiple civic organization boards.



Walter Ploskon
Principal, Managing
Director
Niles Bolton
Associates

Walter is recognized for his ability to work closely with clients to find a

balance between market requirements of even the most complex projects and the design creativity demanded in today’s competitive market.

Walter’s strength of strategic problem solving, with an emphasis on design has produced national and international projects of all sizes and budgets to meet the needs of his clients including several award-winning multifamily and commercial projects. His extensive experience in mixed-use, market rate, attainable/workforce, and affordable housing provides clients with creative and thoughtful leadership bringing projects to reality.

A registered architect in 11 states including the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, Walter has served on or advised committees at ULI, NMHC, AIA, and NCARB. He is currently the Chair of Urban Land Institute’s Suburban Development and Redevelopment National Product Council and member of ULI Washington’s Housing Product Council. In 2017, Walter graduated from the Washington DC ULI Regional Land-Use Leadership Institute. He has also participated in public speaking engagements on successful project management practices and best practices in multi-family design for development. Walter earned both his Bachelor and Master’s degree of Architecture from the University of Maryland.