

Council Approved R24-0681
November 15, 2022

CONGRESS HEIGHTS

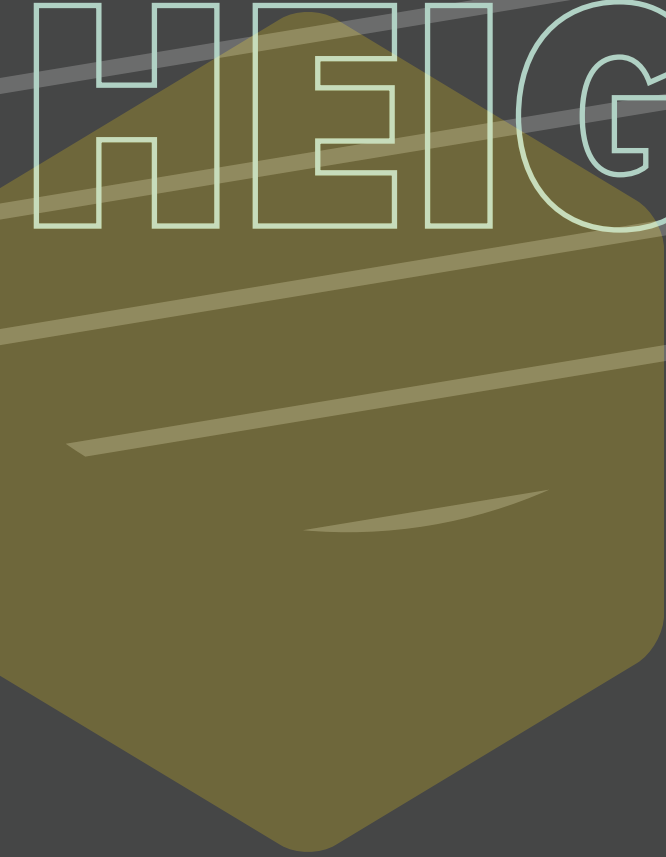
SMALL AREA PLAN

District of Columbia
Office of Planning



 WE ARE WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

CONGRESS HEIGHTS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A Vision of Congress Heights at Shepherd Parkway

The Congress Heights Small Area Plan (CHSAP) is a guide for the community, District government, housing providers, property owners, and advocacy organizations to implement the Comprehensive Plan’s policies for greater equity and resiliency. Developed during the COVID-19 public health emergency, the CHSAP sets a community-informed vision in advance of future development within the neighborhood and in relation to broader local and metropolitan growth patterns.

Congress Heights is beginning to experience significant change after many years of stalled investment. With the location of a new mixed-use community at St. Elizabeths East and several new public amenities, including a state-of-the-art hospital, longtime residents, business owners, and community organizations have expressed concern about the future of the community and whether they will benefit from these changes.

To address these concerns, the Office of Planning (OP) embarked on a people-centered planning approach that aligns with citywide priorities of housing production, economic recovery, and equity. Most significantly, the CHSAP envisions a community that responds to the economic and housing needs of both longtime and new residents, supports greater resiliency for vulnerable residents in particular, and celebrates the rich history and culture of this community’s public spaces.

Through the implementation of this plan, residents will see increased investment in inclusive resources and neighborhood amenities. Future private redevelopment and zoning changes will also be guided by the recommendations in this Small Area Plan, which emphasizes increased housing opportunities for all and improved public spaces.

The CHSAP builds on the assets of the Congress Heights community to outline a vision for a more sustainable and equitable neighborhood. The CHSAP is framed around six focus areas:

- Housing Diversity and Affordability
- Civic Facilities
- Economic Development and Opportunity
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Parks and Public Realm
- Transportation and Access

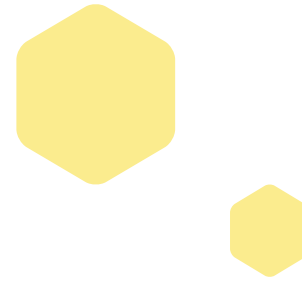
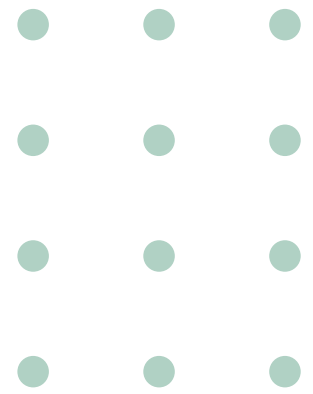


An equitable Congress Heights will ensure that existing residents can stay & thrive in place.

- Resident Vision







INTRODUCTION

The Congress Heights Small Area Plan outlines a community-informed vision of a thriving neighborhood that provides socioeconomic stability for longtime residents, equitable growth and access to opportunity, improved public amenities, and safe and vibrant public spaces. Community residents and stakeholders desire equitable access to District resources that support residents and businesses, and amenities that are responsive to the needs of families, youth, and senior residents, whom residents identify as vital contributors of the community's vibrancy.

In addition to developing a shared community vision for Congress Heights and identifying ways to integrate ongoing community activities, the CHSAP addresses the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased development interest in Southeast DC, including the adaptive reuse of St. Elizabeths East and the redevelopment of Barry Farm.

The CHSAP planning area includes predominantly low to moderate density housing, two commercial centers, and significant government and institutional uses. It also encompasses the historic St. Elizabeths Hospital site consisting of Federal agencies on the

West Campus and ongoing mixed-use redevelopment on the East Campus. The study area is bounded by St. Elizabeths and Suitland Parkway to the north, Stanton Road SE to the east, Oxon Run Parkway SE and Atlantic Avenue SE to the south, and I-295 to the west.

WHY PLAN NOW?

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update identified Congress Heights as an area in need of planning analysis to determine the desired scale, mix, and intensity of development, future circulation patterns, and provisions for open space and public facilities.

The CHSAP is recommended in Action FSS-2.5.A of the Far Southeast and Southwest Element and in the Generalized Policy Map. It is guided by the Comprehensive Plan's focus on racial equity, COVID-19 Pandemic recovery, and barriers to housing access and affordability. The CHSAP responds to the Future Land Use Map, which designates Medium Density Mixed-Use along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE





Community tour with community stakeholders

corridor and at the Congress Heights Metro Station.

Although this is the first Small Area Plan for the Congress Heights community, it builds on the policies developed in the 2012 St. Elizabeths East Master Plan, and the 2014 C.H.A.S.E. (Congress Heights, Anacostia and St. Elizabeths) Action Agenda and Pattern Book.

DRIVING FORCES

Anti-Displacement and Community Resiliency

Congress Heights is on the verge of change. Large-scale redevelopment of public lands in and around the neighborhood, especially at St. Elizabeths, has coincided with increased interest from private developers. Concerned with how development may transform the area and uncertain about how the Congress Heights community will benefit from anticipated development, stakeholders called for an equity-focused community plan to help guide growth and change. In response, OP initiated the CHSAP process with an equitable development framework that centers the socioeconomic and health outcomes of longtime residents, with the goal of strengthening community resiliency, livability, and housing

affordability in Congress Heights.

Housing

In 2019, Mayor Bowser set a bold goal to deliver an additional 36,000 new units of housing and 12,000 units of dedicated affordable housing by 2025. The District's Housing Equity Report, released later that same year, created Planning Area-specific targets for total housing units and dedicated affordable units. The report established a need for an additional 1,120 new affordable housing units in the Far Southeast and Southwest Planning Area and underscored a need to preserve existing affordable housing units. Building on the analysis and goals of the Housing Equity Report, affordability across a range of housing types is a central focus of this plan.

Equity Challenges in Congress Heights

Ward 8

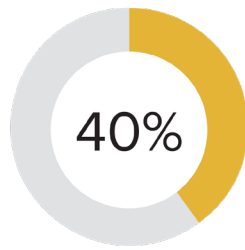


Ward 6



Ward 8 has 1/5 of the local access to grocery stores enjoyed by residents in Ward 6.

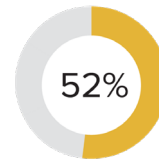
Source: 2018 American Community Survey



40% of Congress Heights residents live below the poverty line, compared to 18% District-wide.



49% of Congress Heights residents are living with a disability



of residents live in low food access areas.

50% are low-income
28% are children
9% are older adults

EQUITY IN PLACE

The Comprehensive Plan states that “equity exists where all people share equal rights, access, choice, opportunities and outcomes, regardless of characteristics such as race, class, or gender.” The Comprehensive Plan Framework Element provides a vision for racial equity in particular, stating that “the District achieves racial equity when race no longer determines one’s socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live or their socioeconomic status; and when racial divides no longer exist between people of color and their white counterparts.”

The planning approach for Congress Heights centers the Comprehensive Plan’s commitment to equity and racial justice by exploring these key questions: How has the neighborhood changed? How will it continue to change, and for whom?

This framing has informed the planning process and recommendations in the following ways:

- Documentation and acknowledgment of historical discriminatory land use and development practices through an existing conditions analysis.
- Disaggregation of demographic and community participation data by race, gender, and other socioeconomic factors, where possible, to indicate inequitable engagement and outcomes.
- Implementation of a transparent engagement process, beginning with the acknowledgment of the role urban planning has played in furthering

discrimination and inequitable outcomes in communities of color.

- Development of a community vision for equitable and inclusive growth rooted in participatory engagement, centering of black voices and reflection on the lived experiences of residents.

Finally, the CHSAP process incorporated a Health Equity Impact Review, led by the Office of Health Equity at DC Health. This process included an analysis of health outcomes and an evaluation of recommendations to identify potential adverse effects.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Through the implementation of the CHSAP, the Congress Heights community will see improved community resilience and economic stabilization, especially in the face of public emergencies and other community shocks and stressors. The community will also see safer use of the public realm and a heightened public awareness of the remarkable historic and cultural contributions of its diverse residents. Finally, improved housing variety, affordability and equitable economic access will allow longtime Black residents to remain in Congress Heights and benefit from anticipated growth.

ABOUT SMALL AREA PLANS

A Small Area Plan supplements the Comprehensive Plan and outlines recommendations for growth and development at the neighborhood scale. Small Area Plans are developed through a collaborative public process that provides opportunities for community input on priorities in the planning area. Small Area

Plans are approved by resolution of the DC Council, and their key recommendations may be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan in the future.

Small Area Plans:

- Supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing land use and urban design guidance for the development of city blocks, corridors, and neighborhoods;
- Empower residents to develop strategic priorities that will shape future development in their neighborhoods; and
- Guide capital budget decisions and agency investment priorities.

The CHSAP will guide future growth in Congress Heights through multi-year implementation by both the public and private sector. Community members, advocates, and stakeholders are critical to the implementation process. This plan will be used by:

- DC Agencies: to plan capital improvements, public investments, and programming.
- The Zoning Commission: to evaluate development proposals that require discretionary approval.
- Property Owners and Developers: to understand community development priorities and create more compatible projects that meet existing and future needs.
- Community Stakeholders: to implement community-led recommendations, evaluate development proposals, and advocate for implementation actions by DC Agencies and the DC Council.

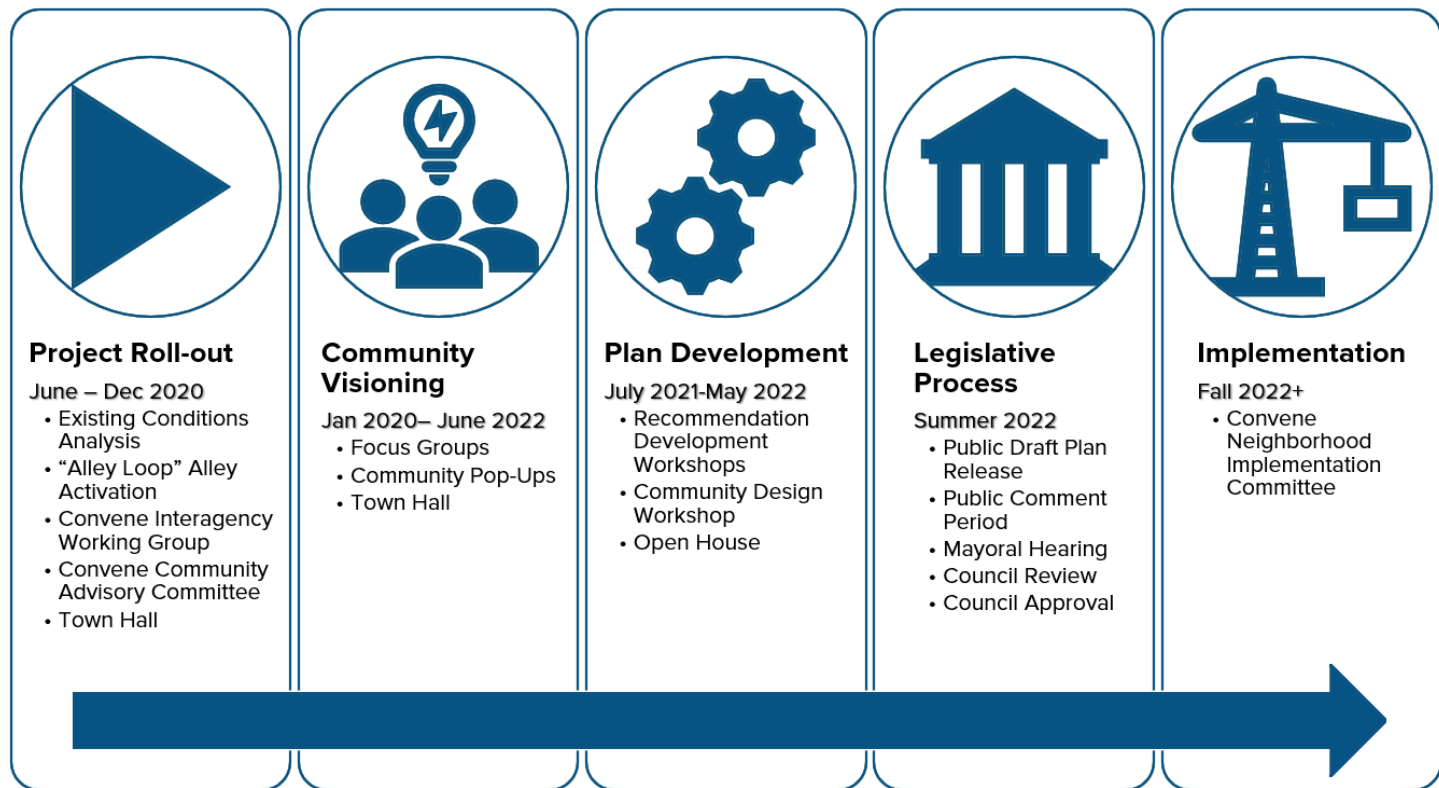
HEALTH EQUITY IMPACT REVIEW

DC Health's Office of Health Equity (OHE) continues to develop its Health Equity Impact Review (HEIR) which proactively reviews projects, especially those related to the built environment. The overarching purpose of this process is to:

- Evaluate the potential health outcomes of proposed projects on individuals and communities;
- Support healthy communities, healthy community design, and development;
- Inform decision makers about the potential health impacts of proposed policies, programs, or projects; and
- Identify opportunities to reduce negative or disparate health effects.

Over the course of the CHSAP process, OHE has collaborated with OP to develop a HEIR pilot. The HEIR serves as a companion to the CHSAP and as a component of plan development and implementation.

Plan Process



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

OP developed a multi-pronged and flexible engagement plan in order to maximize public access to the planning process across abilities, languages, and schedules. For example, in-person engagements, including pop-ups, were held at accessible venues and OP provided accessibility options for the in-person public hearing. OP also provided language options on the project website. Events like senior focus groups and office hours were held during the day for stakeholders who might not be available during evening hours, and online meetings included call-in options for individuals uncomfortable with online applications.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Composed of residents, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, service providers, and representatives of active civic associations, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) has worked with OP since the beginning of the planning process to connect to stakeholders and provide guidance around the community’s most critical issues.

INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP

OP convened an Interagency Working Group (IAWG) of implementing partners across District Government. In addition to working cooperatively with OP to engage the public and develop the plan, IAWG partners

also provided insight into available resources and programming to the project team and the public. IAWG partners will be lead implementers of plan recommendations over the life of this plan.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The planning process began during the COVID-19 public health emergency, which limited the possibility of in-person engagement. Community meetings typically held in-person were transitioned to a virtual platform. Working closely with the CAC, the engagement plan was revised to include participatory methods that met public health emergency guidelines. The plan’s dedicated project website (publicinput.com/CongressHeightsPlan) was used to broadcast, conduct, and record meetings; gather community feedback via online surveys and dedicated email and phone lines; and share key information.

COMMUNITY POP-UPS

As public health guidance shifted, the project team launched in-person community engagement through community canvassing, public space activations, and partnerships with local community groups. OP worked closely with community partners to develop engaging public space activations that not only allowed OP to collect important feedback but created an opportunity to reach stakeholders who have historically been left out of planning processes.

Engagement Summary



7 Topic-Based Focus Groups



3 Town Halls



4 Community Pop-ups And Canvassing Efforts



8,031 Mailers



1 Youth Focus Group And 2 Senior Focus Groups



Online:

- 463 Subscribers
- 930+ Comments
- 5,874 Responses



2 Community Walks



3 Recommendation Development Workshops



1 Community Design Charette

ALLEY LOOP

In partnership with OP, the Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corporation and EL Studio held a two-day alley activation event near Malcolm X Avenue SE and Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE that built on the citywide Washington Alley Project. As the first installation of its kind East of the River, this event demonstrated various ways neighborhood alleys could be re-imagined. Neighbors, passerby, and youth participated in this hands-on activity through surveys, conversation, and chalk art to share their vision of the Congress Heights alley network as a place for play, housing, and community pride.

YOUTH WORKSHOP

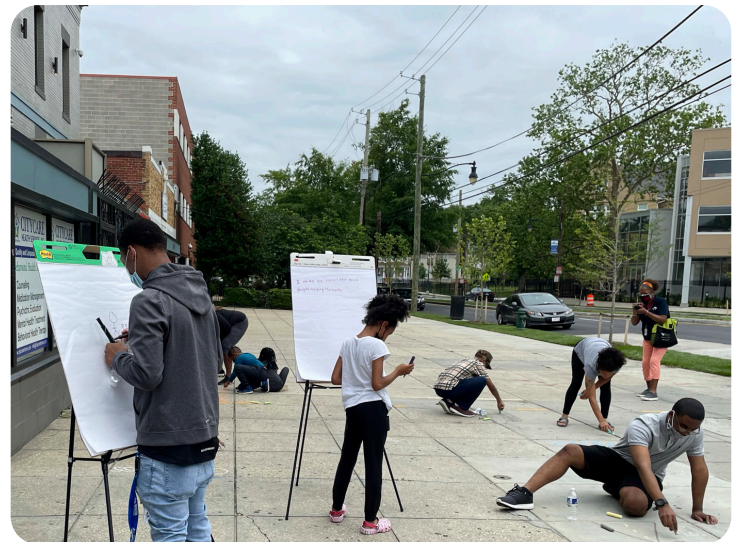
Although youth make up a significant share of the community, their needs are often overlooked in

community development efforts. However, as youth are the future stewards of Congress Heights, their active participation was critical to this equity planning effort.

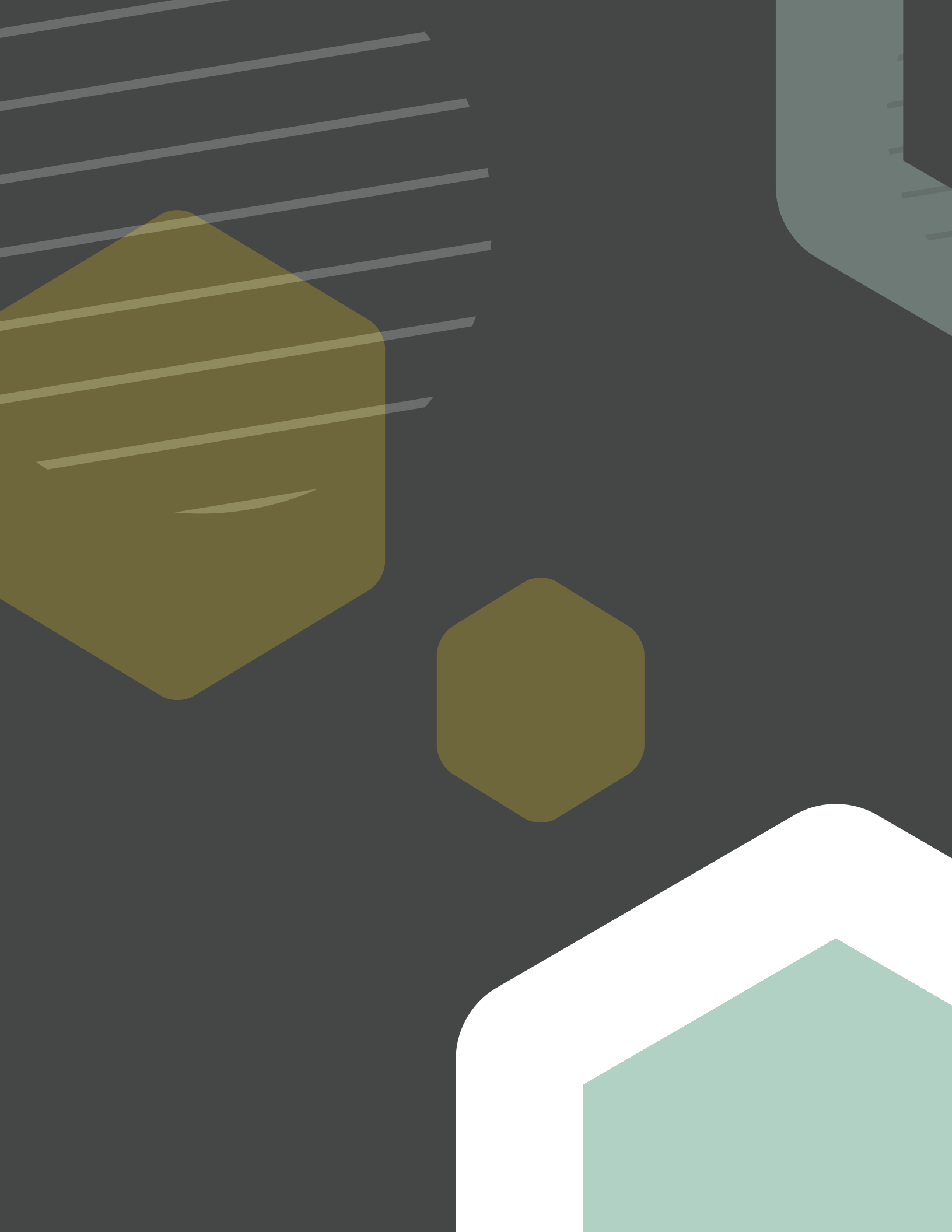
In June 2021, OP partnered with the Ward 8 Community Economic Development Partnership to host a workshop that introduced youth to urban planning and gave some of the youngest residents space to share their desires for Congress Heights. Youth participants expressed appreciation for Congress Heights as a family-oriented community with many Black-led organizations. They also expressed a desire for cleaner streets and parks, improved public spaces, and increased retail options.



Alley Loop Engagement, 2020



Youth Workshop, 2021



ABOUT CONGRESS HEIGHTS

HEIGHTS

WHO LIVES IN CONGRESS HEIGHTS?

Over 25,000 residents, 3% of the District's population, call Congress Heights home. This community is predominantly Black. Congress Heights also has a higher share of youth residents than the District overall.

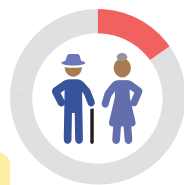
Age Breakdown



Youth (0-17)
33%

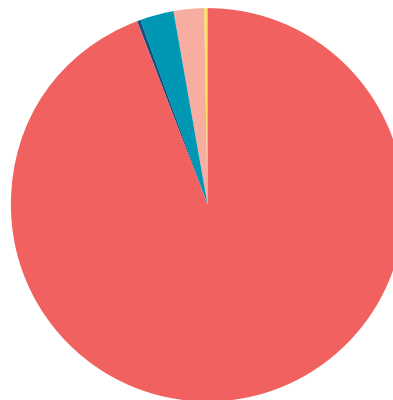


Adults (18-64)
54%



Seniors (65+)
13%

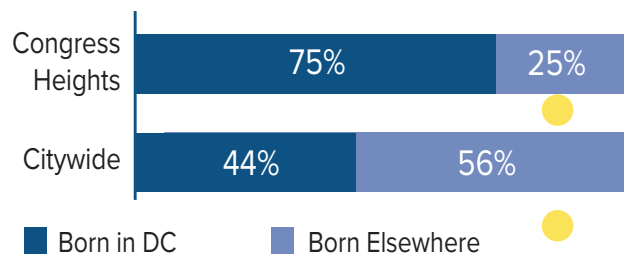
Race



- 93.3% Black
- 2.6% White
- 2.6% Other
- 0.3% Asian

Less than 0.1% of residents identify as American Indian and Alaska Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. 3% of residents identify Hispanic ethnicity.

Place of Birth



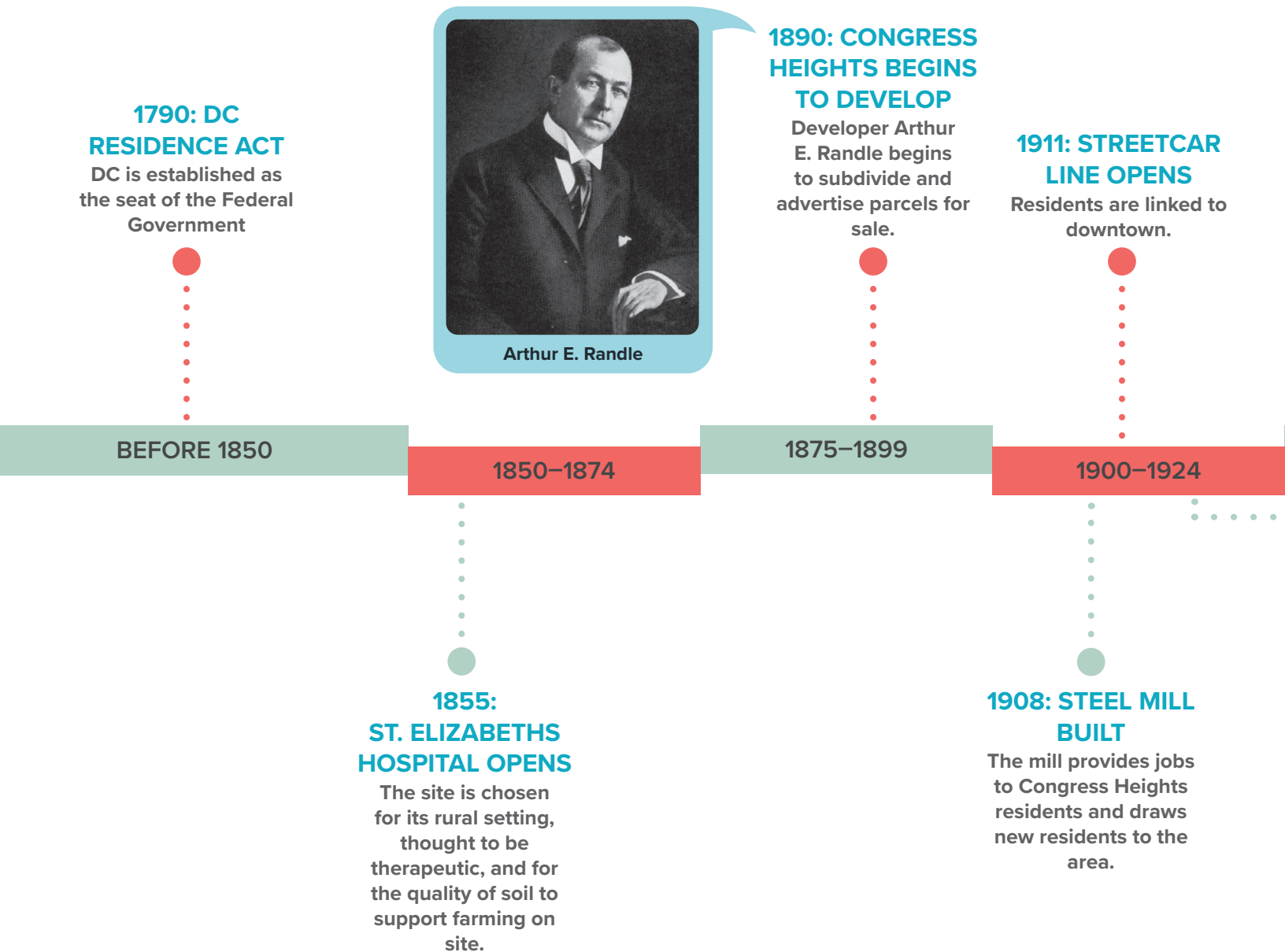
Source: 2018 American Community Survey

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

In 1885, the same year St. Elizabeths Hospital opened, a nearby billboard announced the coming of a new community: “Watch for a Town—Congress Heights.” By the early 1900s, Congress Heights had sprung up along new roads, gas lines, and parks, due in large part to a new electric trolley line that connected it first to Anacostia, and later to downtown. The community attracted government employees, military, and manual laborers alike, as well as St. Elizabeths Hospital

support staff. Retail, trade, and hospitality businesses sprung up along the commercial corridor during this time as well.

By mid-century, the arrival of the automobile meant that access to Congress Heights was no longer constrained by it being the last stop on the commuter line, and its population grew rapidly. The Federal Government’s expanding role during the Great Depression, and later World War II, also brought new residents to the neighborhood. Congress Heights

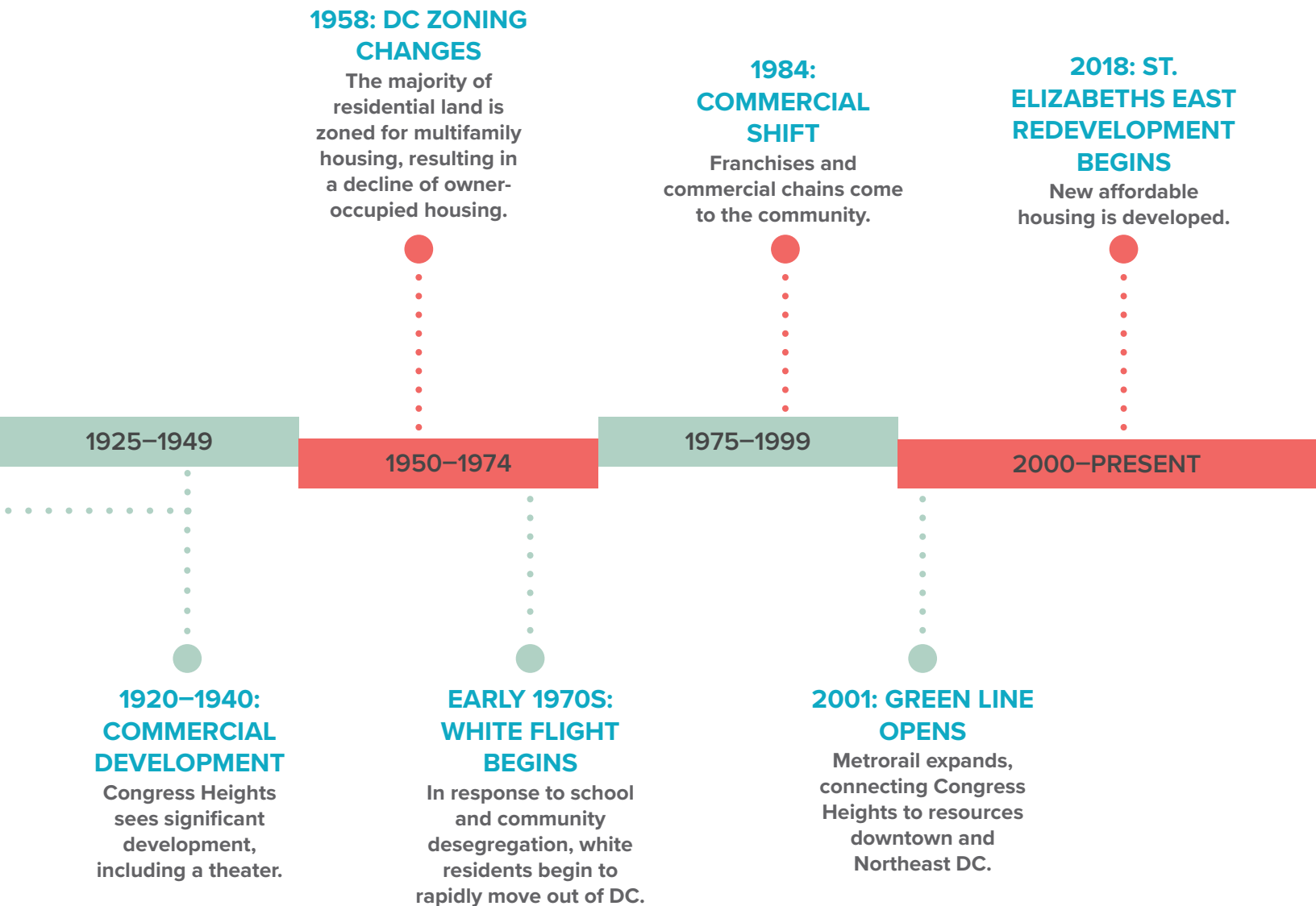


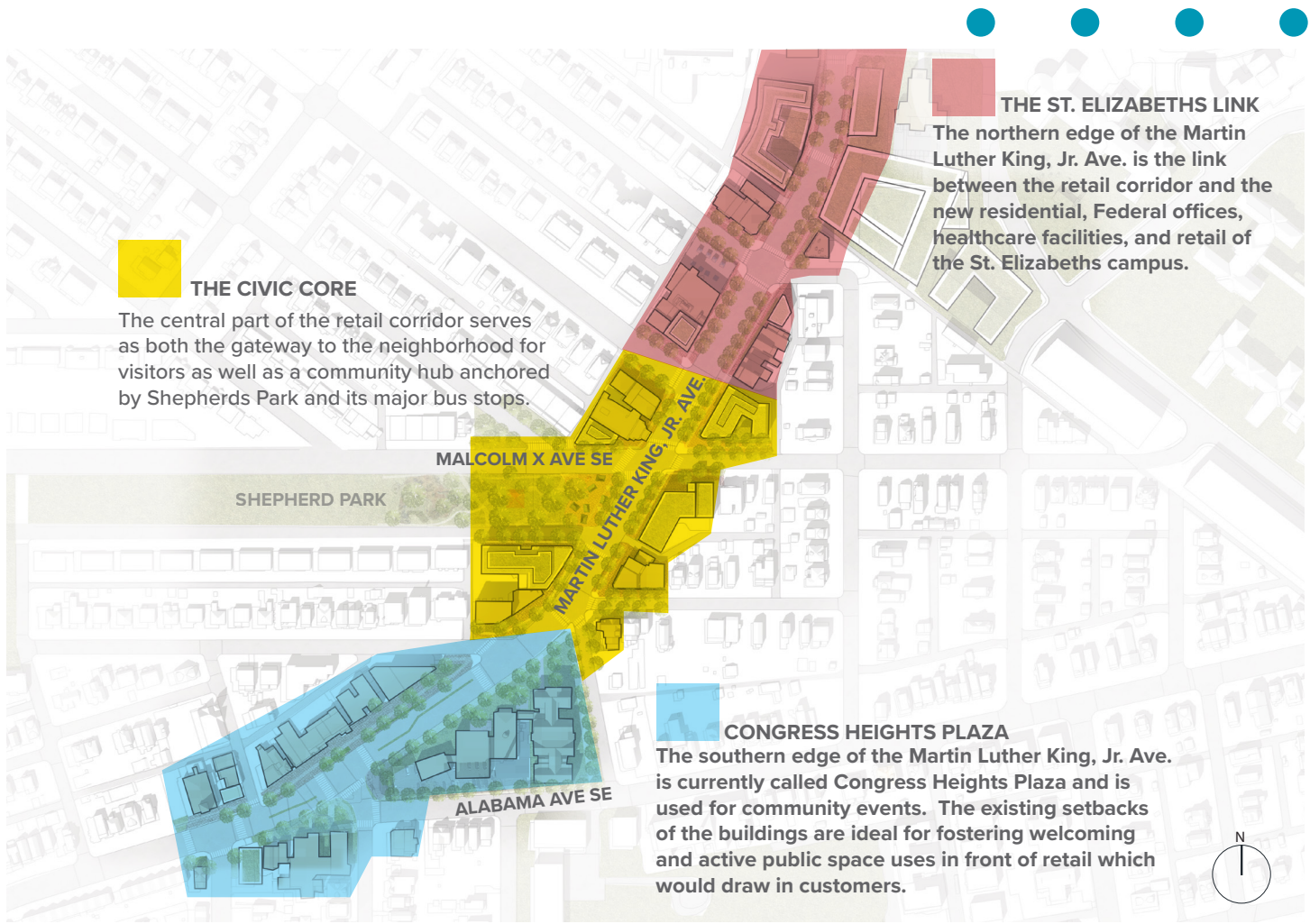
saw unprecedented garden apartment and duplex construction, and the population doubled by the late 1930s.

By the 1960s, the first Black families began moving into Congress Heights, resulting in rapid demographic change and a more multicultural community with new businesses and cultural centers. However, in protest of desegregation policies, white residents soon began to leave the community—and the District—and by the 1970s, what was once a predominantly white

community became predominantly Black.

During the latter half of the 20th century, suburbanization and a higher concentration of commercial uses outside of urban community centers rendered retail along the commercial corridor less competitive. At the same time, the community faced stalled investment in public space, infrastructure, and housing.





THE CIVIC CORE

The central part of the retail corridor serves as both the gateway to the neighborhood for visitors as well as a community hub anchored by Shepherds Park and its major bus stops.

THE ST. ELIZABETHS LINK
 The northern edge of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave. is the link between the retail corridor and the new residential, Federal offices, healthcare facilities, and retail of the St. Elizabeths campus.

CONGRESS HEIGHTS PLAZA
 The southern edge of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave. is currently called Congress Heights Plaza and is used for community events. The existing setbacks of the buildings are ideal for fostering welcoming and active public space uses in front of retail which would draw in customers.

Today, Congress Heights is facing rapid change once again. Currently, new development is driven by investment on the historic St. Elizabeths Campus by the Federal Government, District Government, and the private and nonprofit sectors. There is also a number of new and remodeled homes throughout the area.

LAND USE AND ZONING

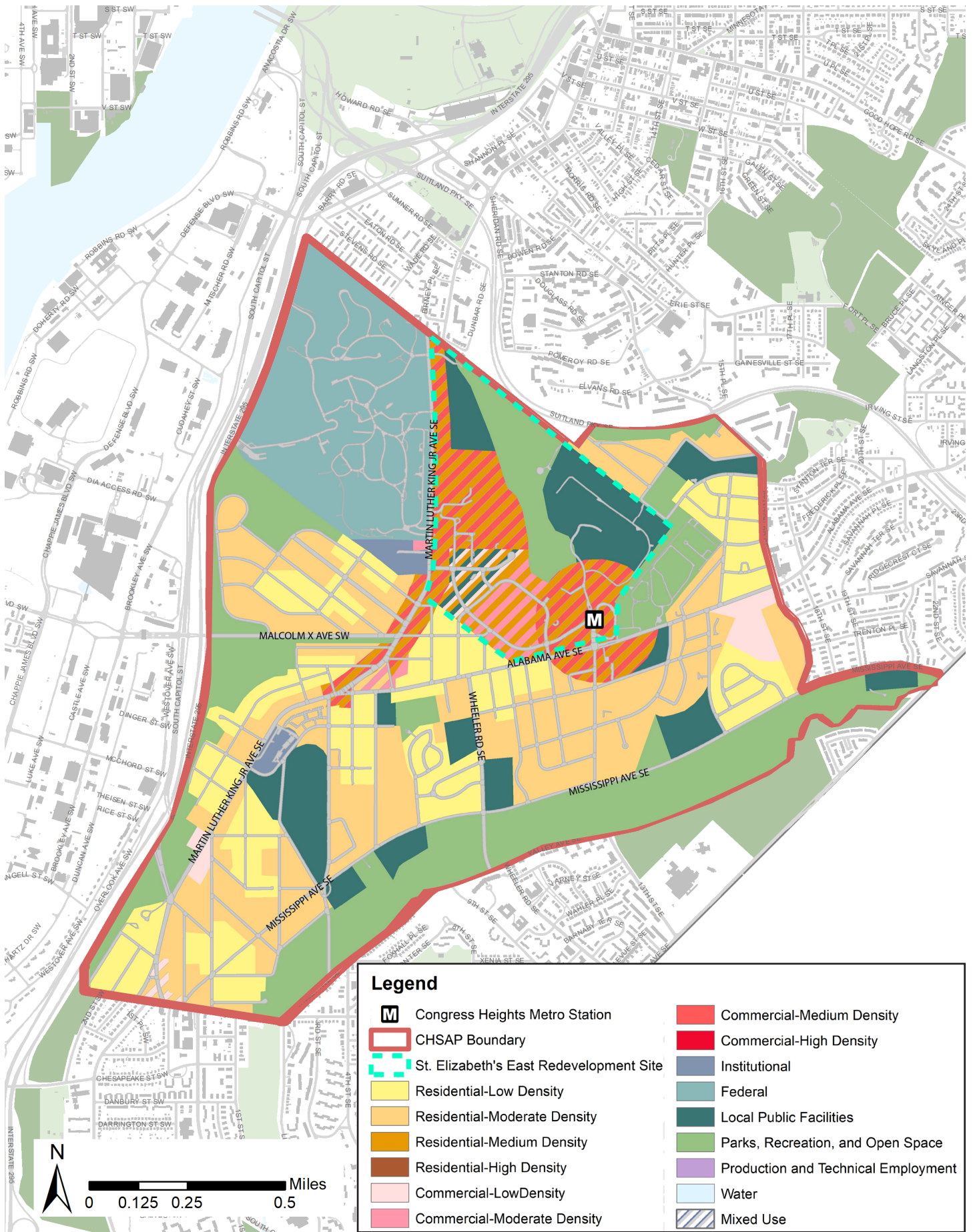
Congress Heights is a mostly low to moderate density residential community. Commercial nodes are located along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE corridor, and at Alabama Avenue SE and Stanton Road SE. The historic St. Elizabeths Campus site is located at the northern part of the community and includes Federal offices on the West Campus and a future mixed-use community on the East Campus. Development on the East Campus is currently underway, guided by the 2012 St. Elizabeths East Master Plan and Design Guidelines, and will include a regional hospital, a new full-service library, and space for nonprofit services.

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map largely identifies low and moderate residential land uses, with medium residential and medium to high commercial land uses surrounding the metro station and along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue (see map on page 16).

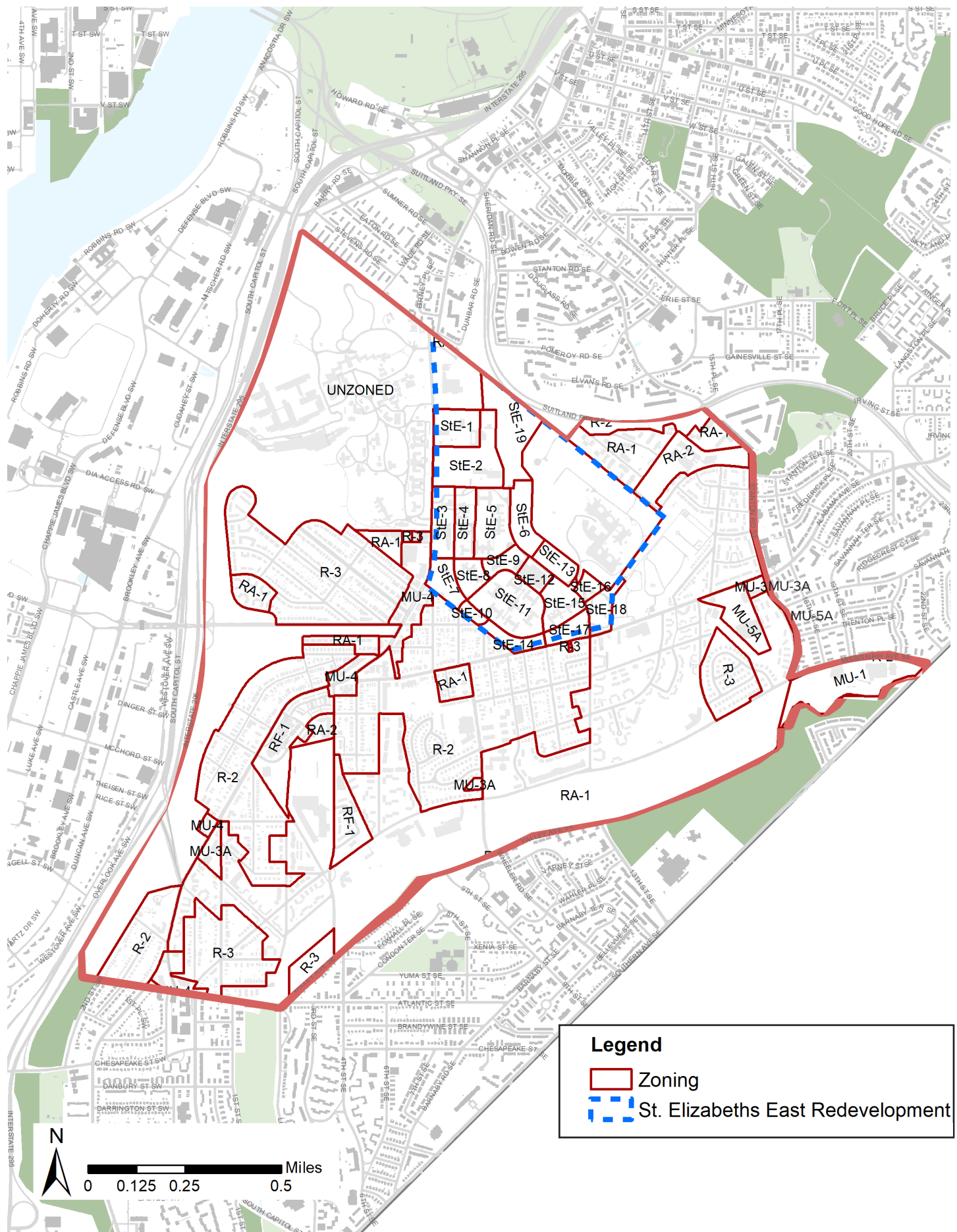
Congress Heights is regulated by low to moderate density residential and mixed-use zones (see map on page 17). The R-2, R-3, and RF-1 zones allow single family detached, semi-detached, and attached houses, which are common in the area. The RA-1 zone allows small multifamily buildings which are also common.

The area has a limited amount of mixed-use zoning which allows for commercial development. The MU-3A and MU-4 mixed-use zones found on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE, Wheeler Road SE, and Alabama Avenue SE allow low to moderate density neighborhood-serving commercial development. The shopping center property on Alabama Avenue is zoned MU-5A, which allows for larger-scale mixed-use development.

Future Land Use Map

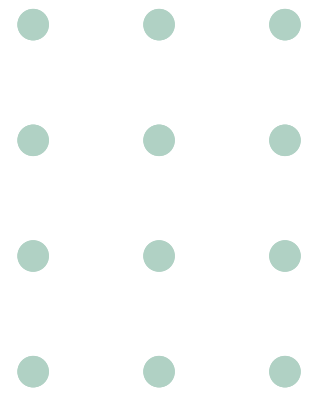


Zoning Map



Legend

- Zoning
- St. Elizabeths East Redevelopment



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed in collaboration with community stakeholders, advocates, and public agencies. The Community Advisory Committee provided critical perspective on proposed policies, and the Interagency Working Group worked closely with community participants and the project team to outline recommendations that addressed the needs heard throughout the planning process. Finally, recommendations were analyzed using the Office of Racial Equity assessment tools to meet District goals for racial equity outlined in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan.

The CHSAP frames recommendations around the following six focus areas:

- Housing Diversity and Affordability
- Civic Facilities
- Economic Development and Opportunity
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Parks and Public Realm
- Transportation and Access

The desired outcomes for each focus area and contributing recommendations are detailed in the following pages.



KEY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Acronym	Agency/Organization Name
ANC	Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8C, 8D, and 8E
Community Partners	Includes: The Congress Heights Partnership, civic associations, etc.
DACL	Department of Aging and Community Living
DCCAH	DC Commission of Arts and Humanities
DCHA	DC Housing Authority
DCPS	DC Public Schools
DCPL	DC Public Library
DCRA	Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
DDOT	District Department of Transportation
DHCD	Department of Housing and Community Development
DMPED	Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
DOEE	Department of Energy and the Environment
DOH	DC Health

Acronym	Agency/Organization Name
DPR	DC Department of Parks and Recreation
DISB	District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities & Banking
DME	DC Deputy Mayor for Education
DSLBD	Department of Small and Local Business
HSEMA	Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
Main Street	Destination Congress Heights Main Street Organization
MOCA	Mayor's Office of Community Affairs
NPS	National Park Service
OCTO	Office of the Chief Technology Officer
OP	DC Office of Planning
OSSE	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Housing Diversity and Affordability



There are nearly 10,000 housing units in Congress Heights. Of these, approximately 13% are vacant, compared to 9% citywide. The majority of occupied units are renter-occupied. Nearly 60% of homes in the study area were built before 1970 while only 18% have been built since 2000.

While the older nature of the housing stock in Congress Heights has contributed to a high percentage of naturally-occurring affordable housing, increased development interest puts it at risk of redevelopment or repositioning for higher, market-rate rents. This would impact residents with low incomes who are already rent-burdened. Additionally, stalled new housing development, zoning constraints that limit new development of small, multi-family buildings, and a high share of rental housing have limited the variety of housing opportunities over time, especially opportunities for homeownership.

VISION

Affordable, attainable, and varied homeownership and rental opportunities that allow families, households aging in place, and young adults to build wealth, with close access to amenities and economic opportunities.

Housing Occupation

Owner-occupied



Renter-occupied

Housing Affordability

55% of Congress Heights residents spend over 35% of their income on housing.

* Housing economists recommend that households should spend no more than 30% of income on housing expenses.

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

Home Values

The average home value citywide is nearly twice the value of homes in Congress Heights.



Source: "Housing Data for Ward: Ward 8". DC Health Matters. dchealthmatters.org. (March 2022)



Multifamily housing in Congress Heights



Single family detached housing in Congress Heights



Townhouses under construction at St. Elizabeths

WMATA JOINT DEVELOPMENT

WMATA recently entered a joint-development agreement for its site at the southern entrance of the Congress Heights Metro Station. As one of a number of similar efforts around the District, this project will align Metro and jurisdictional interests, such as increased ridership and housing options, respectively, and attract investment to the community. This project also reflects WMATA's commitment to equity and will serve to support access to critical services and amenities. This mixed-use development will include both residential and office uses.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan outlines a number of overarching strategies to improve housing, including: expanding housing supply and variety at all levels of affordability, with an emphasis on supporting family housing; maximizing affordable housing opportunities on publicly owned land; preserving access to naturally occurring and dedicated affordable units; and encouraging the development of Accessory Dwelling Units as permitted throughout the CHSAP study area.

To support equitable housing access in Congress Heights and help prevent displacement, the public and private sectors should prioritize both affordable housing retention and the development of higher-density housing. Homeownership opportunities should also be supported through infill development, and family housing should include housing suitable for multigenerational families.

GOALS

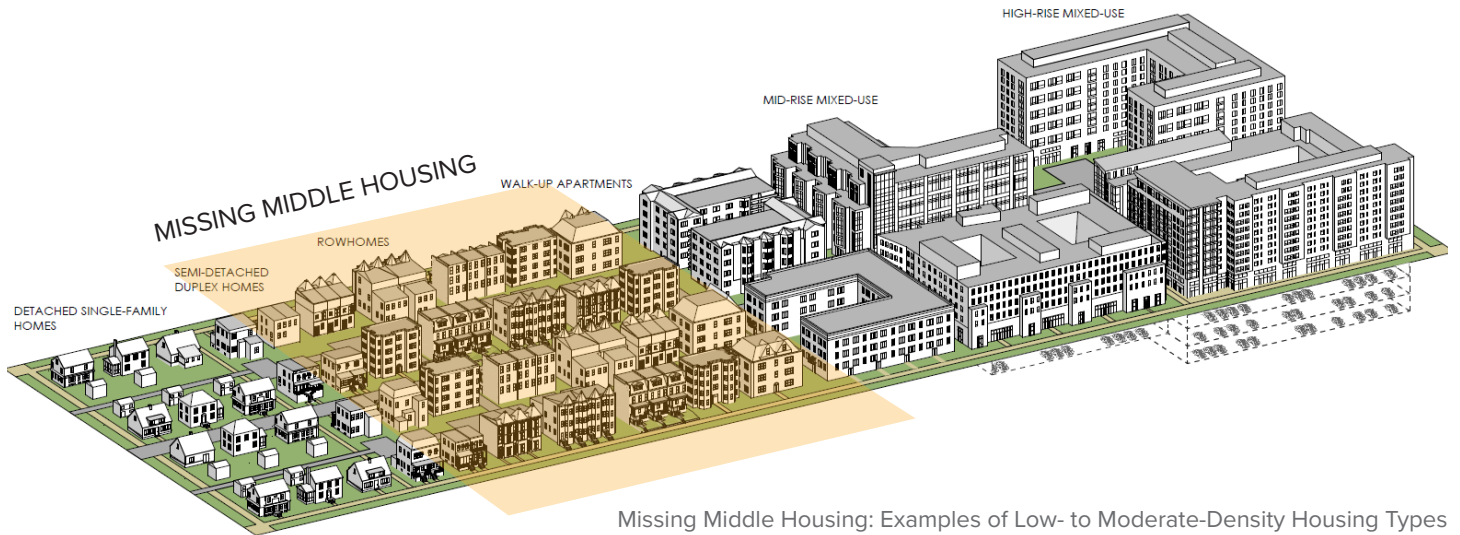
- Increase housing opportunities and expand affordability.
- Improve housing access and safety.

Lastly, as new housing opportunities come into the pipeline, residents will need additional support to access safe and affordable housing through better coordinated community resources that are easy to navigate, and reduce opportunities for residents to fall through the cracks.

Recommendations to Increase Housing Opportunities and Expand Affordability		Implementors
1.1	Expand financial subsidies for the preservation of naturally occurring affordable units, or conversion to dedicated affordable units within the CHSAP study area, as appropriate.	DHCD
1.2	Maximize the amount of affordable housing, especially family housing, multigenerational housing, and senior housing, through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process and the development of District-owned land.	Property Owners/ Developer, DMPED, OP
1.3	Support increased residential density (See Figure 1.3a–c) and infill of underused, vacant, and institutional sites to allow a wider variety of ownership opportunities in residential neighborhoods that align with the Comprehensive Plan.	Property Owners/ Developers, DMPED, OP, DHCD, DCHFA
1.4	Support increased density along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE corridor to support Medium Density Mixed-Use development. (See Figure 1.4)	Property Owners/ Developers, OP

Figure 1.3a. Density and Missing Middle Housing

The Comprehensive Plan designates most of the community for low- to moderate-density residential development. Slightly denser zones within these land use designations are already available to property owners and support opportunities for *missing middle housing*, the range of housing between single family and high-rise multifamily buildings.



Missing Middle Housing: Examples of Low- to Moderate-Density Housing Types

Figure 1.3b. Examples of Zones that Allow for Multiple Units

Zones that support denser housing intensity in areas designated for low- to moderate-residential areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

Density	RF-1	RA-1	RA-2	R-3
Low-Density Residential		X		
Moderate-Density Residential	X	X	X	X

Zoning increases are limited by the current FLUM (map on page 16). However, as OP embarks on a rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan, there will be an opportunity to consider higher density land uses, especially east and west of the Metro station along Alabama Avenue SE.

Figure 1.3c. Example of a Conversion from a Single-Family House to a Two-Unit Building

The RF-1 zone allows homeowners to convert a single unit to two units while staying compatible with the existing housing mix and land use designations. This creates opportunities for more housing type diversity in the community and wealth-building for homeowners at a lower cost than full redevelopment. Below is an example conversion of a single-family home to a multifamily home.

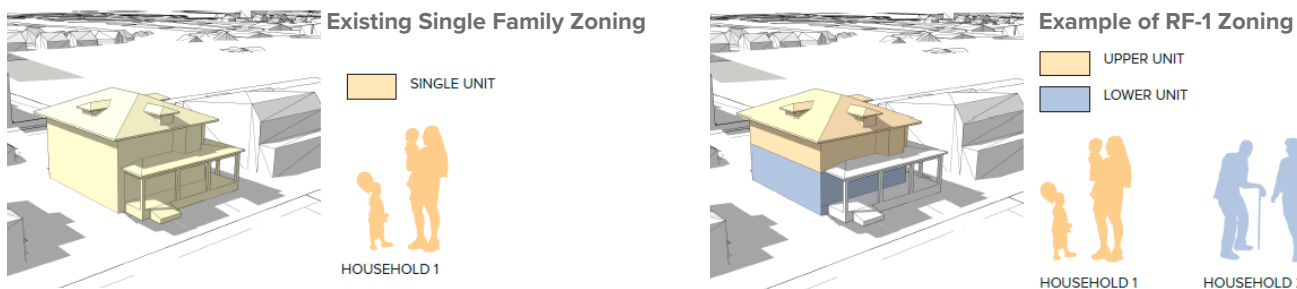
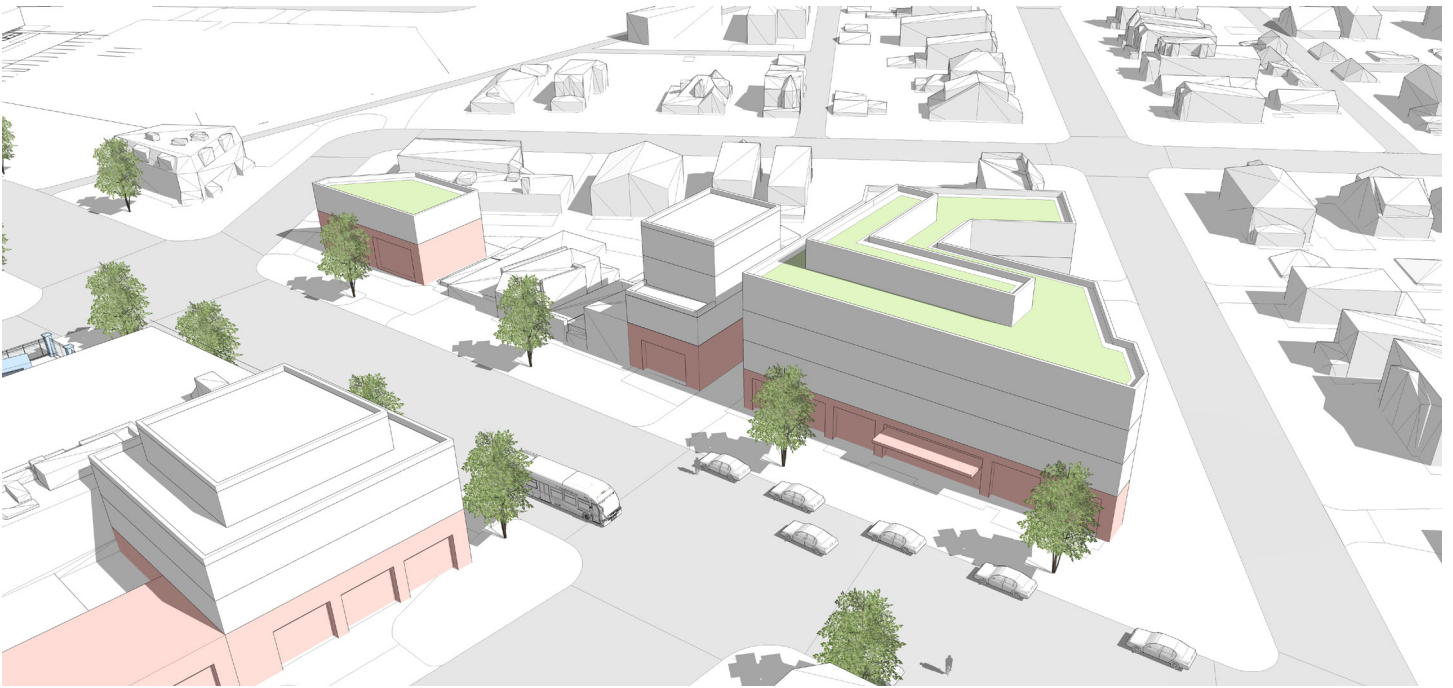


Figure 1.4. Support Increased Density Along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE



Current allowed MU-4 Zone Build-Out at Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE



Potential MU-5 Zone Build-Out at Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE

Recommendations to Improve Housing Access and Safety		Implementor
1.5	Coordinate a community source for wraparound housing support and training services for Congress Heights residents, especially unhoused residents, returning citizens, and vulnerable residents seeking homeownership. Resources should be available in-person and online, in multiple languages, and to residents of all abilities.	Community Partners, DHCD, DCHA, Interagency Council on Homelessness
1.6	Decrease the percentage of income spent on rental housing by expanding funding for direct relief programs.	DHCD
1.7	Expand financial support to low-income homeowners for the rehabilitation of older housing stock to meet code requirements through programs like Single Family Residential Rehabilitation Program (SFRRP).	DHCD, Community Partners
1.8	Support individuals in removing physical barriers for older adults and people with disabilities who wish to safely stay in their homes through community education, expanded funding, and training.	DACL, DCRA, Community Partners
1.9	Expand community access to resiliency measures for flood mitigation and energy efficient retrofits such as home improvements, insurance, education, targeted outreach initiatives, and financial support.	DOEE, DISB, HSEMA, Community Partners

Civic Facilities



Congress Heights has a number of existing and planned civic resources. Over the next five years, investments in new civic facilities include a full-service replacement of the Parklands-Turner Library, redevelopment of the Congress Heights Recreation Center, and the Bard High School Early College. Additional investments are planned at the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center and the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center.

The multitude of civic resources provides an opportunity to think creatively about use of space and connections in programming across facilities.

VISION

Facilities that are accessible, responsive to community needs, programmed to improve the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of community members.



Southeast Tennis and Learning Center



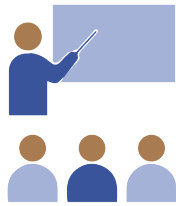
Existing Congress Heights Recreation Center

Community Facilities Serving Congress Heights



11

DC Public Schools



6

Public Charter Schools



2

Libraries



5

Recreation Facilities



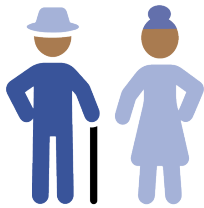
1

Police Station



2

FEMS Stations
(Emergency Services)



1

Senior Wellness Center



1

Human Service Center



1

Job Center



1

Boys and Girls Club



Ballou Public High School

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress Heights is served by over 30 community facilities. Through the District’s investments, 30+ community facilities serve as a foundation for strengthening community resiliency. By aligning ongoing future investments with community needs, these facilities will be more accessible, provide resources to the residents who need them, and respond to future shocks and stressors that may affect the community.

GOALS

- Improve public facility access.
- Strengthen community resilience.

Recommendations to Increase Public Facility Access		Implementor
2.1	Locate temporary, family-oriented, and multigenerational programming during development at the following sites to maintain continuous access to public amenities and contributions to the public realm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parklands-Turner Library storefront • Congress Heights Recreational Center 	DPR, DCPL
2.2	Provide community access to an indoor swimming pool through redevelopment of the Congress Heights Recreation Center or coordinated access to the Ballou High School pool.	DPR, DCPS
2.3	Allow off-hours public access to community school playgrounds and fields.	DCPS
Recommendations to Strengthen Community Resilience		Implementor
2.4	Develop new and modernized facilities to be resilient and responsive to potential public emergencies to reduce gaps in community access.	DGS, DOEE, DPR
2.5	Pilot “Resilience Hub” resources in Congress Heights to aid residents in accessing in-person resources during and between acute emergencies.	DOEE, DGS, HSEMA, DPR
2.6	Encourage the development of healthcare services, such as dental and mental health services, that complement the Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center and provide reliable access to comprehensive health care.	DMHHS, DOH, DGS

WHAT IS A RESILIENCE HUB?

Climate Ready DC and the *Resilient DC Strategy* call for the District Government to create Community Resilience Hubs. Community Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities that provide information and services to support resilient communities before, during, and after emergency events. As climate change brings more flooding, extreme heat, and severe storms, Community Resilience Hubs will complement existing emergency response services and serve DC communities year-round by promoting health, providing meeting spaces, educating the community about risks and emergency preparedness, and supporting workforce development. Resilient power systems are also a critical feature of Community Resilience Hubs since they will need to operate and provide services such as refrigeration, cell phone charging, and communications during outages.

While climate resiliency is a critical element of Resilience Hubs, the pilot program works with residents to identify other services that can be supported in these facilities. Some examples of services that Congress Heights stakeholders have expressed a need for include wraparound housing information and mental health resources.



Community-led school update at Hart Middle School

Economic Development and Opportunity



Due to a myriad of economic conditions, nearly half of residents rely on some form of public assistance to meet their basic needs. The median household income within the study area is \$36,477, which is \$40,000 less than the median household income citywide. On average, a child who grew up in Congress Heights earns approximately \$24,900 per year in their 30s—about \$7,000 less than the District-wide average.¹ This is largely due to employment options available to residents, which are typically low-paying service jobs.

Congress Heights residents also experience high unemployment rates. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress Heights residents had an unemployment rate of 12%, compared to the citywide unemployment rate of 6%. During the pandemic, the unemployment rate further increased.

Retail in Congress Heights includes one of the two full-service grocery stores in Ward 8, fast food and carryout restaurants, liquor stores, corner stores, limited financial services, and personal grooming services. However, residents must spend money outside of Congress Heights on specialty food, health and fitness services, clothing, and casual and sit-down dining. The community has expressed a desire for sit-down dining and quality retail as well as expanded fresh food options, in particular.

¹ Opportunity Insights. OpportunityInsights.org (2021).

VISION

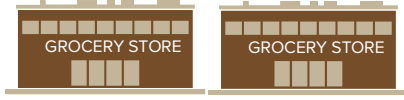
Improved access to business development and higher-paying career opportunities through targeted investments in grants, site improvements, capacity-building, and workforce resources such as childcare and family support services.



Businesses on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE

Grocery Store Access

Ward 8

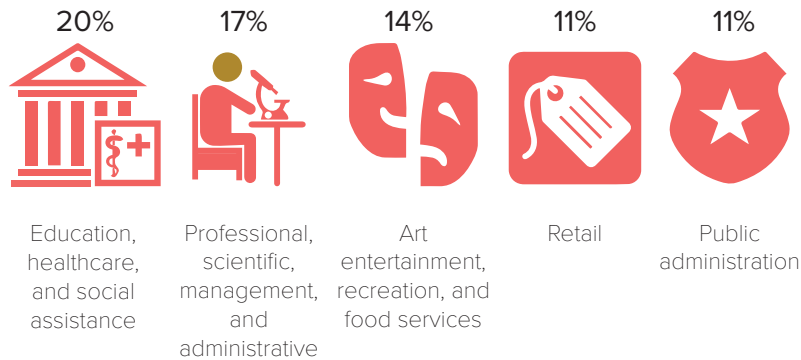


Ward 6



Ward 8 has 1/5 of the local access to grocery stores enjoyed by residents in Ward 6.

Top Jobs Held by Residents



Employment in Congress Heights



308 businesses
4,574 workers

68% of these jobs are in the service industries, primarily at St. Elizabeths Hospital and the DC Entertainment and Sports Arena.

Source: 2018 American Community Survey

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT

The difference in health and economic outcomes between residents in Congress Heights and those District-wide reflect the acute daily challenges residents face. By the end of 2020, Ward 8 saw the highest number of deaths in the District and the third highest number of cases overall. Service and health employees experienced the highest rates of exposure to COVID-19, contributing to increased infections and deaths.

In the wake of a dual public health and economic emergency, these divides have made weathering and recovering from economic instability more difficult. For example, the economic impact from COVID-19 further exacerbated high unemployment rates in Ward 8. In November 2020, the unemployment rate in Ward 8 reached 16.7%, 5 points higher than the previous year, and more than twice the rate citywide.

Citywide, COVID-19 also triggered a collapse of commercial childcare providers which decreased access to childcare slots. This condition has particularly impacted employed adults and caregivers who rely on childcare coverage, especially women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress Heights residents have continued to experience diminished economic outcomes both at the household and community levels. However, there is a growing opportunity to address existing job gaps and gaps in food and community retail.

The community workforce is positioned to benefit from new and expanded medical, food and service employment opportunities in and around St. Elizabeths East in the coming years. At the same time, increased development interest can be leveraged to fill retail needs at vacant and underutilized sites.

District Government has continued to build community capacity for improved retail and food access across the District, and in Ward 8 in particular, through DSLBD and DMPED grants. DMPED and OP are currently

GOALS

- Improve food access opportunities.
- Support community businesses, entrepreneurs, and the workforce.

implementing the Nourish DC Collaborative, which provides funding and support to local food businesses, with a preference for businesses located in Wards 5, 7, and 8.

To fully leverage these opportunities, additional investments in the resilience of local businesses and workforce development are critical.

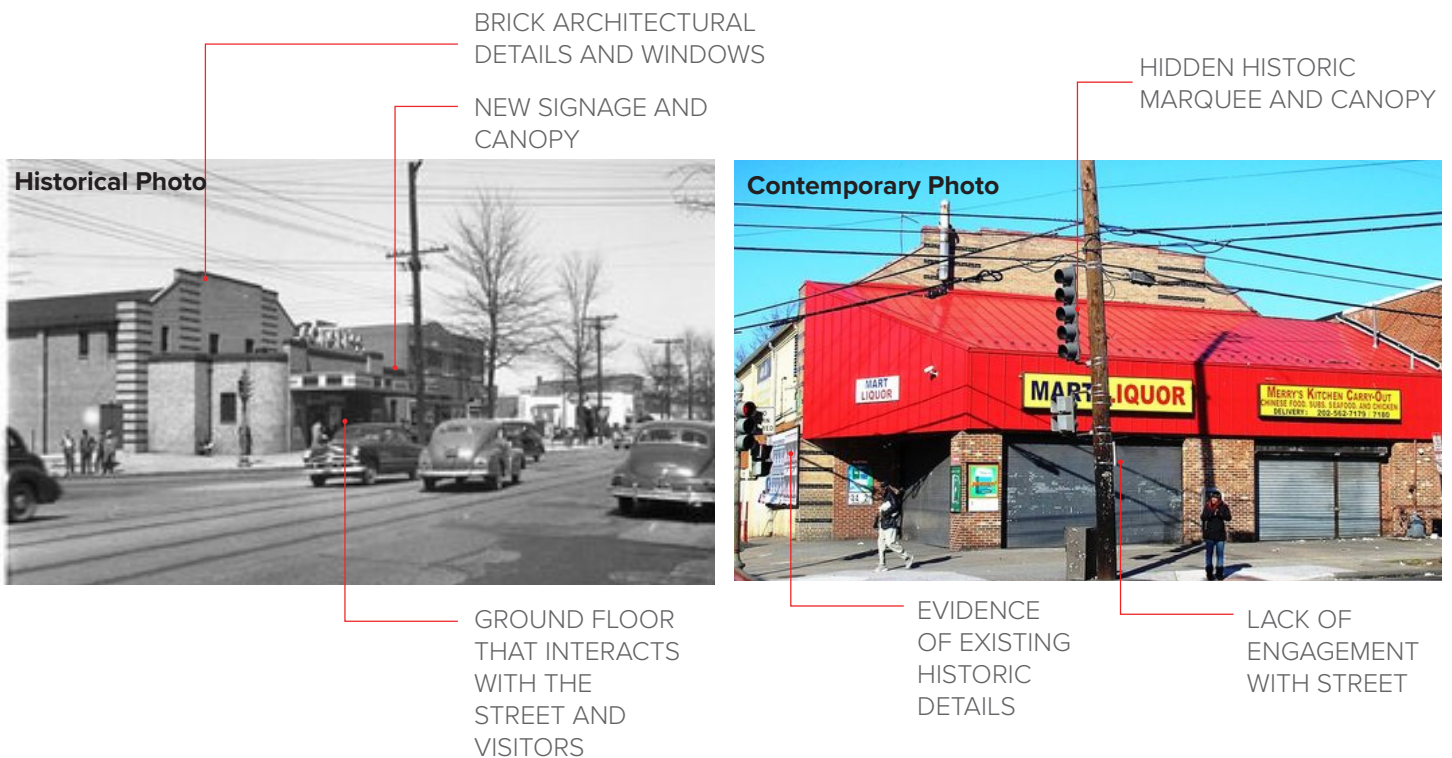
Recommendations to Improve Food Access Opportunities		Implementor
3.1	<p>Improve access to healthy food by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing access to District funding for grocers, restaurants, and other food businesses. • Prioritizing fresh food retail in new development projects and through the PUD and District-led RFP processes. • Coordinating partnerships between public and faith-based institutions, food nonprofits, and businesses. • Increasing opportunities for urban agriculture in small open spaces. 	OP, DSLBD, DOH, DPR, DMPED, Property Owners/Developers, Community Partners
3.2.	Expand access to affordable commercial kitchen space in new public facilities and future shared community incubator sites.	DPR, DMPED, Property Owners/Developers, Community Partners
3.3	Provide technical assistance to restaurant operators and support dining pop-ups in coordination with food trucks and markets.	DCRA, DSLBD, DDOT, Community Partners



Examples of responsive community food retail.

Recommendations to Support Community Businesses, Entrepreneurs, and the Workforce		Implementor
3.4	Implement wayfinding that connects St. Elizabeths East to the historic commercial corridor along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE to bring more foot traffic.	DMPED, Main Street
3.5	Target increased technical assistance for community and Black-owned businesses seeking funding and business development opportunities.	DSLBD
3.6	Pilot a new Legacy Business Designation for historically and culturally significant community businesses to provide grant funding and business assistance to protect them from displacement.	DSLBD, OP
3.7	Restore the Congress Heights Theater facade and support adaptive reuse as a community anchor featuring family-serving retail or a cultural destination.	Property Owners/ Developers, Community Partners
3.8	Target increased incentives for community-owned and community-serving retail along the Martin Luther King, Jr. commercial corridor through the programs like Nourish DC.	DMPED, DSLBD, WDCEP, Community Partners
3.9	Increase access to childcare facilities, incentivize expanded programming, and provide support to families with caregivers who work outside of typical office hours.	Property Owners/ Developers, Community Partners, OSSE
3.10	Provide medical and related career training and job placement opportunities for youth, young adults, and returning citizens in anticipation of the new Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center at St. Elizabeths Campus.	DOES, DCPS, OSSE, DME, Community Partners

Figure 3.7. Restore the Congress Heights Theater



Historic and Cultural Preservation



There is a rich, multicultural history and living culture in Congress Heights. However, there is little public record of generations of immigrant and Black contributions to the community, and just three sites are formally designated by the DC Historic Preservation Review Board. These include two federally significant historic districts, Fort Circle Parks and St. Elizabeths Campus, and the historic fire station on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE. While there may be sites that are eligible for designation, especially residential buildings at the historic center of the community, many others do not have the age or preservation for eligibility.

Public art installations, while iconic, have been few. Community institutions such as the Congress Heights Community Arts Center and the Destination Congress Heights Main Street, have been important resources in advancing commemoration and public art. Yet, many opportunities exist to further integrate cultural elements and art into public realm investments.



Sculpture at Congress Heights Metro Station

VISION

Inclusive historic commemoration, celebrations, and public art that amplify local history and culture while supporting community artists and storytellers.



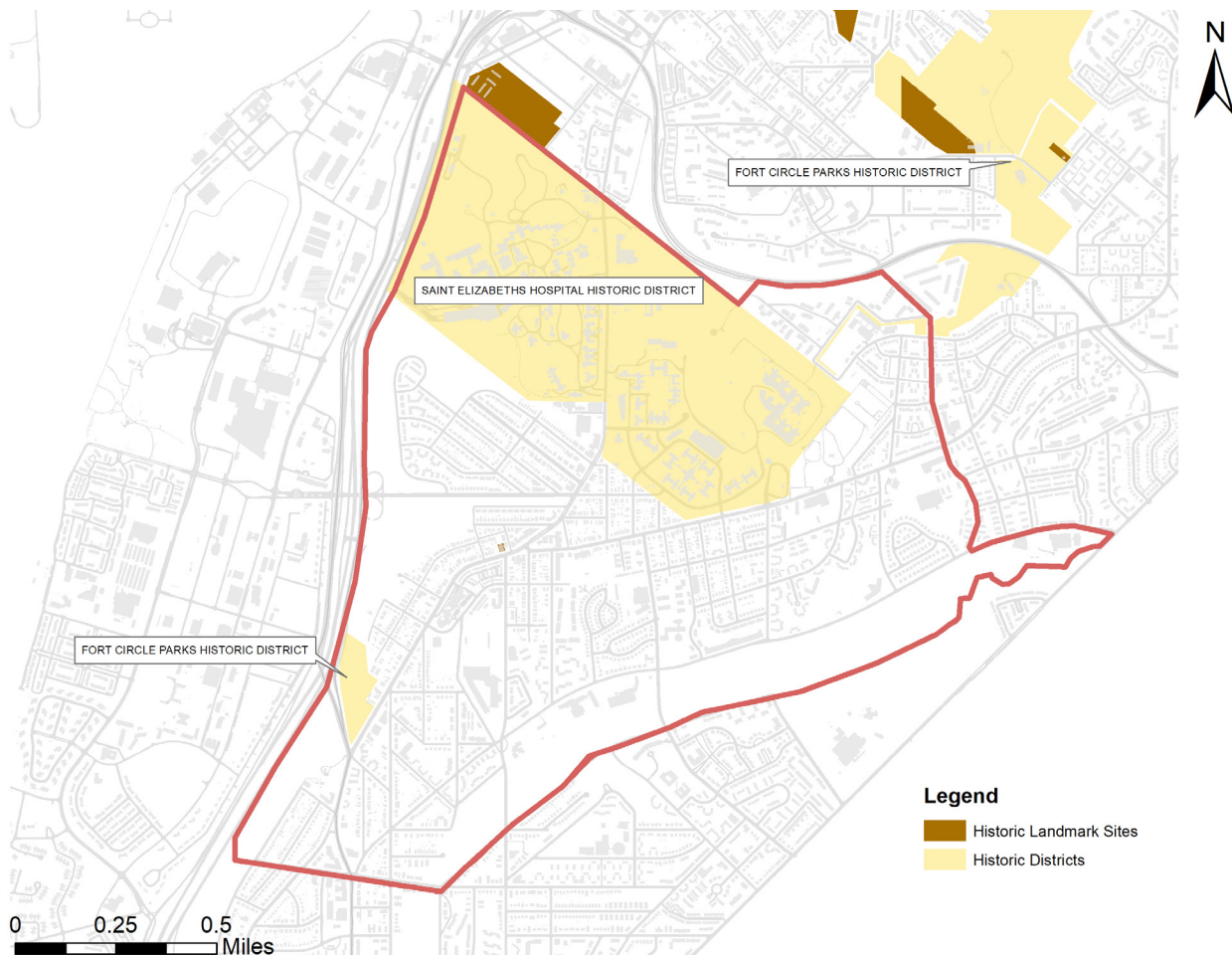
Cultural expression during a community-led protest

Credit: Salim Adjofo



Historic Theater at Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE and Malcolm X Ave SE

Current Designated Historic Resources



RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress Heights residents are proud of their community’s history and culture and have expressed excitement about sharing and celebrating their so far untold stories about the community’s history. With support for the collection and recognition of community history and culture, residents will see more of their stories reflected in the public realm and neighborhood events.

GOALS

- Amplify local history.
- Support the celebration of community culture.

Recommendations to Amplify Local History		Implementor
4.1	Record community history through listening sessions, interviews, and mapping exercises, and include this history in updated Historic Preservation Office publications.	OP, Community Partners
4.2	Recognize contributions of Black and immigrant communities in public space through historic trails and signage.	Community Partners, DDOT, OP
4.3	Support community efforts for historic landmark and historic designation of eligible resources within the project area.	OP, Commemorative Works Committee
4.4	Designate eligible community sites as formal District landmarks through a community-led process.	Community Partners
4.5	Promote the celebration of historic homes through the coordination of informational signage at notable residential sites.	Property Owners/ Developers, Community Partners, OP



Art All Night community bazaar, 2021

Recommendations to Support the Celebration of Community Culture		Implementor
4.6	Increase public art and celebrate iconic architectural facades at key community sites by leveraging programs such as Arts in the Right-of-Way, Playable Art, facade grants, and place grants. (See figure 4.6)	Community Partners, OP, DDOT, CAH, DGS, DPR,
4.7	Leverage grants and the Our City, Our Spaces program to provide technical support for public space activations and community events.	OP, Community Partners
4.8	Identify funding opportunities for community arts, cultural, and youth organizations for public art, memorials, installations, and public space activations.	CAH, OP, Community Partners

Figure 4.6. Increase public art and architectural celebration at key community sites.



Parks and Public Realm



What is the Public Realm?

The public realm includes the public right-of-way and publicly accessible areas such as street frontages, plazas, and unprogrammed green space. These spaces are impacted by adjacent building uses, public space design, and the infrastructure quality.

The existing infrastructure in Congress Heights has the potential to become delightful and useful public spaces. There are two major parks adjacent to main streets: Oxon Run Parkway and Shepherd Parkway. Wide sidewalks and deep building frontages along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE are used as community gathering space. One space, informally known as Congress Heights Plaza, is a popular site for concerts and markets, and is the home of annual Art All Night Events in the community.

Destination Congress Heights and community volunteers manage cleanup and beautification efforts. The infrastructure, however, is in need of maintenance and several public spaces pose significant safety and health risks. For example, street lighting is scarce and poorly maintained, and parks are in dire need of cleaning and maintenance. In addition, high concentrations of aboveground utilities reduce the quality of street experience while utility poles take up critical space along narrow sidewalks. Much of the community outside of parks experience high temperatures due to low vegetative cover paired with a high prevalence of paved surfaces. This is known as the *heat island effect*.

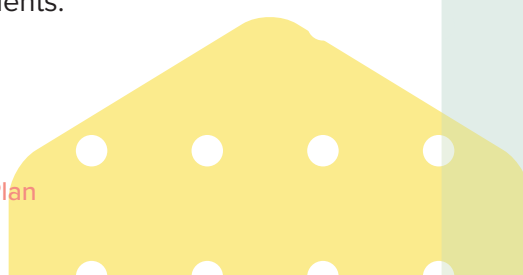
Building use also has an impact on the public realm. Along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE corridor, many retail spaces are vacant, underutilized, or in need of repair, while liquor stores are some of the only storefronts that encourage gathering in public space, sparking safety concerns from residents.

VISION

Safe, well-maintained, and family-friendly, community-serving public spaces activated by consistent programming and equipped with necessary infrastructure.



Trails at Oxon Run Park





Congress Heights Plaza

Parks in Congress Heights

Legend

- Federal/NPS Parks
- DC Parks



RECOMMENDATIONS

Park lands and community spaces, such as the Congress Heights Plaza, are some of the community’s greatest assets. To better support community use of these spaces, investments should target maintenance and safety, activation, and creating a community-wide network of usable public space. To this end, implementing the following recommendations will support improved comfort and safe activation of public space.

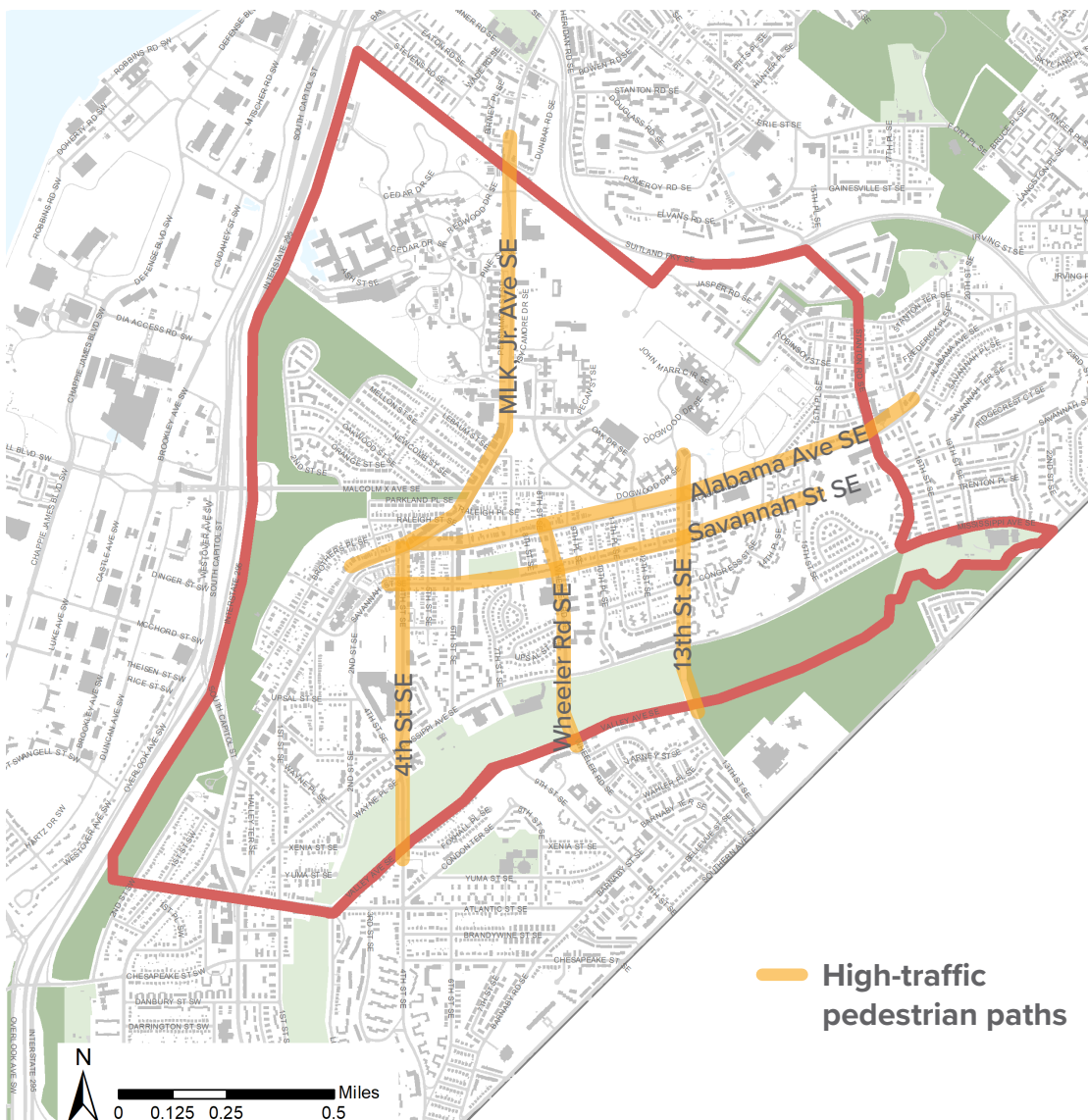
GOALS

- Improve the quality and safety of public spaces.
- Increase and activate usable public common space.

Recommendations to Improve the Quality and Safety of Public Spaces		Implementor
5.1	<p>Increase investment in infrastructure along high-traffic pedestrian paths (see Figure 5.1) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving ADA accessibility, widening sidewalks where necessary and completing sidewalk repairs • Increasing lighting • Planting a continuous tree canopy for shading and heat island reduction • Increasing the number of bus shelters and seating, especially along severe inclines at 4th Street SE, Wheeler Road SE, and 13th Street SE • Incorporating public art in new and improved pedestrian facilities such as benches. 	DDOT
5.2	Coordinate on the implementation of the Shepherd Parkway Master Plan and explore opportunities for shared management, greater collaboration, or a transfer of jurisdiction of the Parkland portion of the parkway to the District.	NPS, DPR, OP
5.3	Mitigate unauthorized vehicle access and illegal dumping at both Oxon Run Park and Shepard Parkway through narrowed pathways and low-impact vehicular barriers.	DPR, NPS
5.4	Collaborate with the NPS to develop a master plan for Oxon Run Park.	DPR, DOEE, NPS

Recommendations to Increase and Activate Public Common Spaces		Implementor
5.5	Increase investments in Wi-Fi coverage in the public right-of-way, outside of public buildings, and in public parks to facilitate public realm activation and increase broadband access for the community.	DDOT, DPR, DGS, DOEE, OCTO
5.6	Support temporary recreational activities at all public parks, such as farmers markets, social events, and holistic health activities.	DPR, Community Partners
5.7	Increase passive and active green space throughout the community through Playable Art investments, PUDs, and District RFPs.	CAH, DDOT, DGS, Property Owners/Developers, Community Partners, DMPED
5.8	Develop sites adjacent to parks, plazas, and streets along Alabama Avenue SE, Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE, according to the Building Frontage Design Guidelines (page 42).	Property Owners/Developers, OP, DDOT
5.9	Improve wayfinding to community parks and between regional park systems to better connect them	NPS, DPR, DDOT

Figure 5.1. Increase investment in infrastructure along high-traffic pedestrian paths.



BUILDING FRONTAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES

These design guidelines provide additional direction for development and public space projects. They illustrate potential design strategies for buildings and the public realm to both realize the community vision and maintain a cohesive built environment.

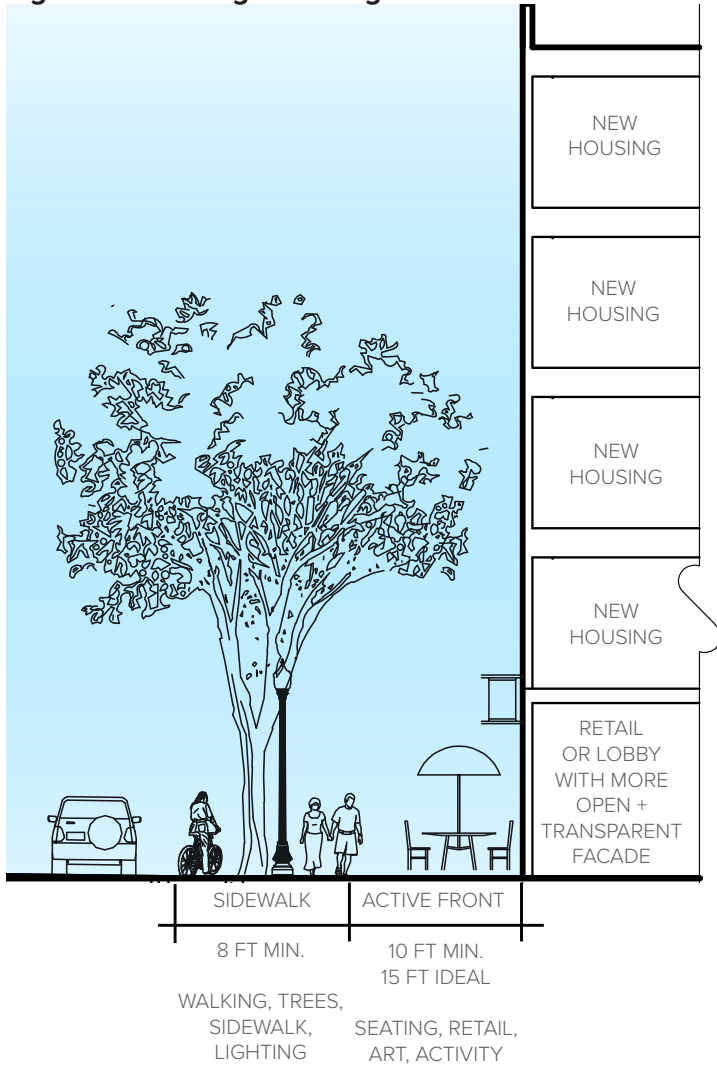
The CHSAP Building Frontage Design Guidelines are applied during development review processes, public space interventions, and building facade improvements. Design Guidelines supplement recommendations for activating the parks, plazas, and streets along Alabama Avenue SE, Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE:

- Encourage community-oriented, street-activating uses adjacent to prominent public spaces and parks (see Figure 5.9a), such as residential entryways, dining, family-serving retail, and cultural uses.
- Provide frequent entryways, windows, and operable walls where possible to encourage visual and physical connections between the ground floor and the sidewalk. Avoid long blank walls along the sidewalk. (See Figure 5.9b.)
- Orient private balconies and terraces toward the street to encourage an interface between the private and public realms, and to increase eyes on the street.
- Design buildings to include awnings, plantings, signage, and seating to create a visually engaging and inviting building edge, frame the sidewalk, and create stopping points to relax, gather, and socialize.

Figure 5.9a. Encourage street-activating uses adjacent to prominent public spaces and parks



Figure 5.9b. Design buildings to activate the street.



Example of an activated ground floor in Takoma, DC

Example of a Reimagined Public Realm

PARK-ADJACENT USES ACTIVATE SHEPHERD PARKWAY

IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING

INCREASED VEGETATION

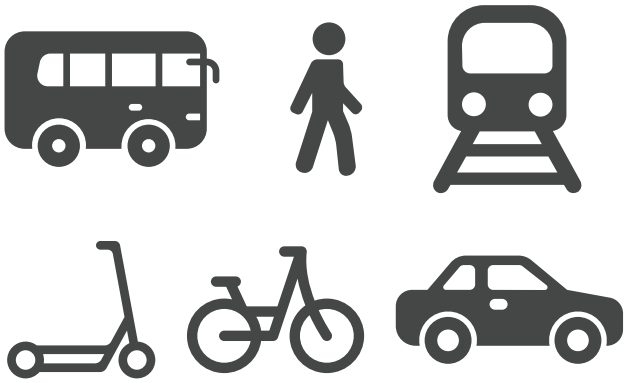


REDESIGNED SHEPHERD PARKWAY

STREET FURNITURE FOR PEDESTRIAN COMFORT

STREET FRONTAGE ACTIVATED BY OUTDOOR DINING.

Transportation and Access



Congress Heights residents are served by Metro Rail (Congress Heights Metro Station) and several bus routes. Although nearly half of households do not have a car and rely on transit, the Congress Heights Metro station on the Green Line sees some of the lowest ridership rates in the system. Many residents have reported a preference for Metrobus, especially for trips around the Ward and to Ward 7. Residents also experience longer commute times by car and on transit than the District average. This is due to residents working farther away from their homes and working schedules that require off-peak commuting, when transit runs less frequently or not at all.

Residents experience limited access to micro-transit facilities such as corrals for scooters and electric bikes, and safe bikeways. The lack of a cohesive bike network leaves cyclists vulnerable to conflicts with high-speed vehicles. Safety is also a concern for pedestrians who rely on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE and Alabama Avenue SE to reach community destinations. Due to the frequency of crashes, especially involving pedestrians, the District's Vision Zero Plan identifies both corridors as Vision Zero Corridors, a designation used to highlight roadways in need of critical safety interventions.

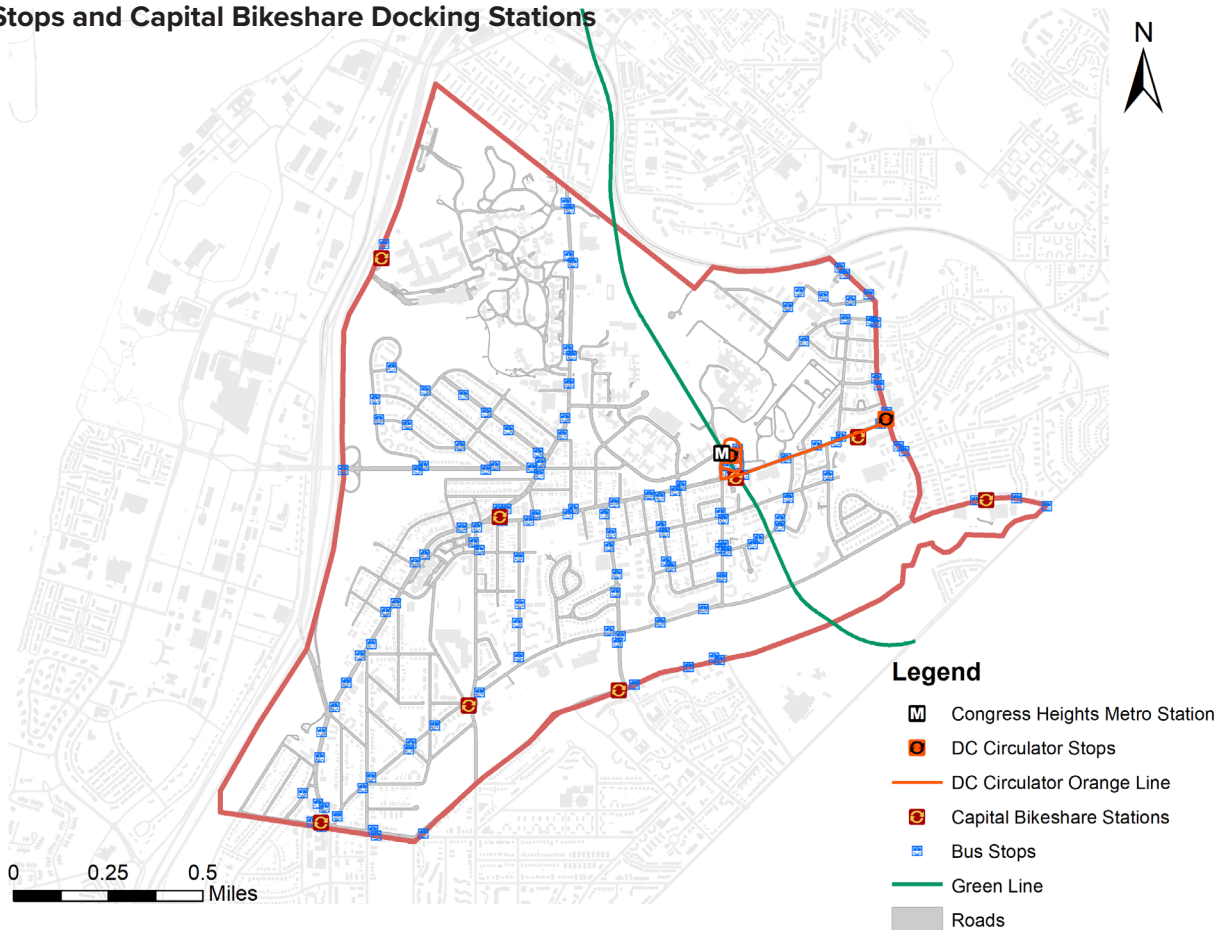
VISION

Safe, convenient, and affordable multimodal options that connect residents to jobs, services, and amenities.

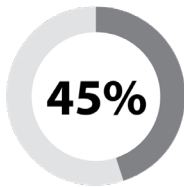


Metrobus stop on the commercial corridor

Transit Stops and Capital Bikeshare Docking Stations



Transportation Use by Residents

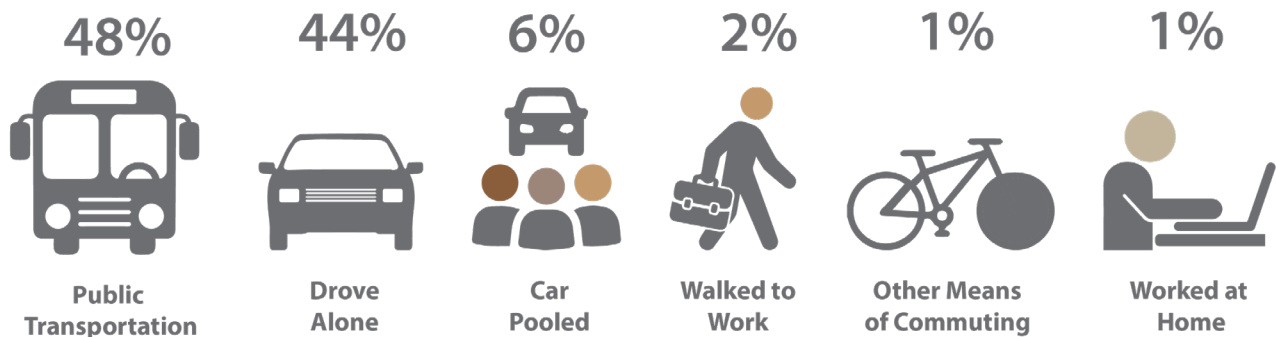


45% of Congress Heights households do not have cars compared to 36% District-wide.



180%+ increase in Capital Bikeshare trips since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Comparatively, regional ridership only increased by 44%.

Transportation to Work



Congress Heights residents spend over 4,000 more minutes—about three extra days—commuting to work each year than the average District worker.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress Heights residents are active users of multimodal transportation options; however the existing transportation infrastructure does not reflect or safely accommodate the growing interest in these options. As the District invests in more sustainable transit options, improvements in Congress Heights should prioritize pedestrian safety, shared multimodal resources, and equitable access to these resources.

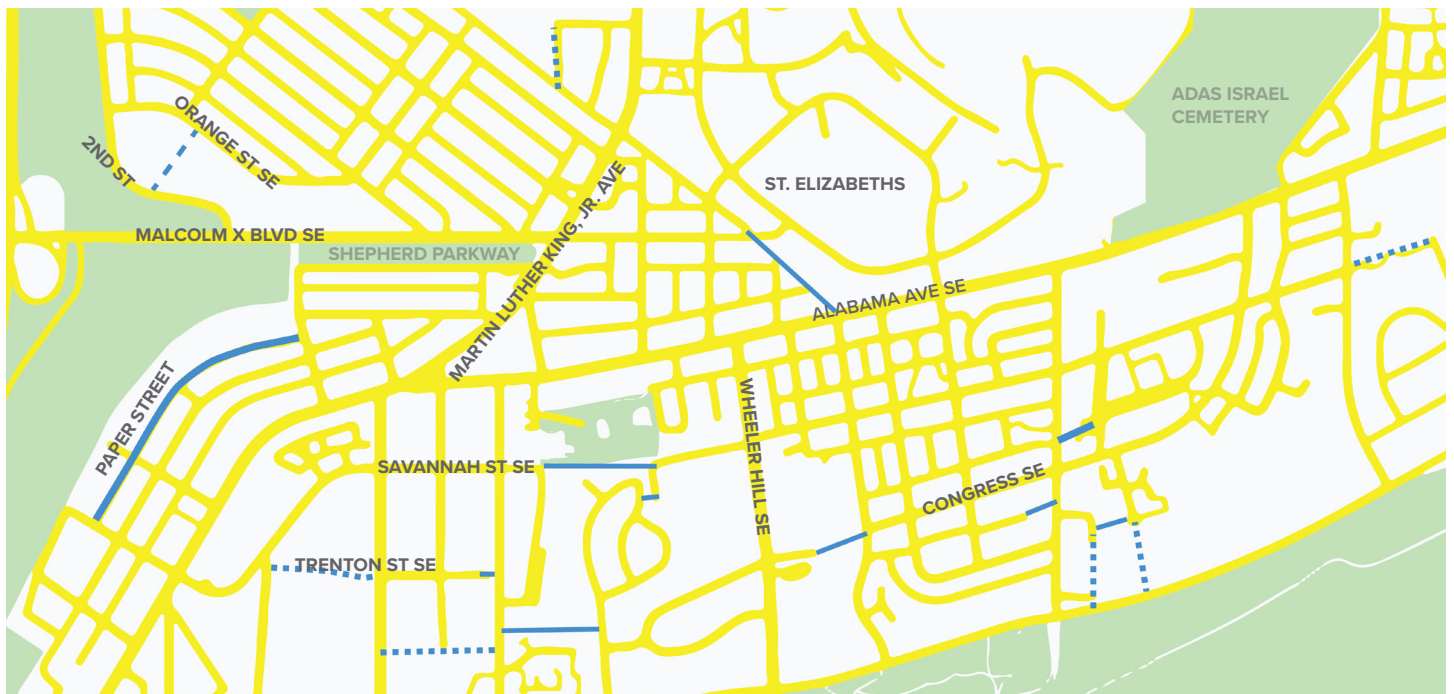
GOALS

- Improve connectivity and safety.
- Support transportation options.

Recommendations to Improve Connectivity and Safety		Implementor
6.1	<p>Implement recommendations from the Congress Heights Pedestrian Access Study to improve pedestrian safety and access to key neighborhood destinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave Commercial Corridor • the new Parklands-Turner Public Library • Giant Shopping Center • Congress Heights Recreation Center <p>Implement these recommendations through ongoing maintenance and improvements of the public right-of-way and private lands.</p>	OP, DDOT, Property Owners/Developers
6.2	Implement complete street networks and pedestrian networks as part of future large site redevelopment. (See Figure 6.2)	DDOT, OP, ZC, Property Owners/Developers
6.3	Target continued Vision Zero improvements along Martin Luther King, Jr. and Alabama Avenues SE in order to improve the safety of walking, biking, scootering, and driving.	DDOT
6.4	Develop additional dedicated off-street parking and loading areas, shared parking at St. Elizabeths East, and improved wayfinding to parking along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE business corridor.	DDOT, DMPED, Property Owners/Developers

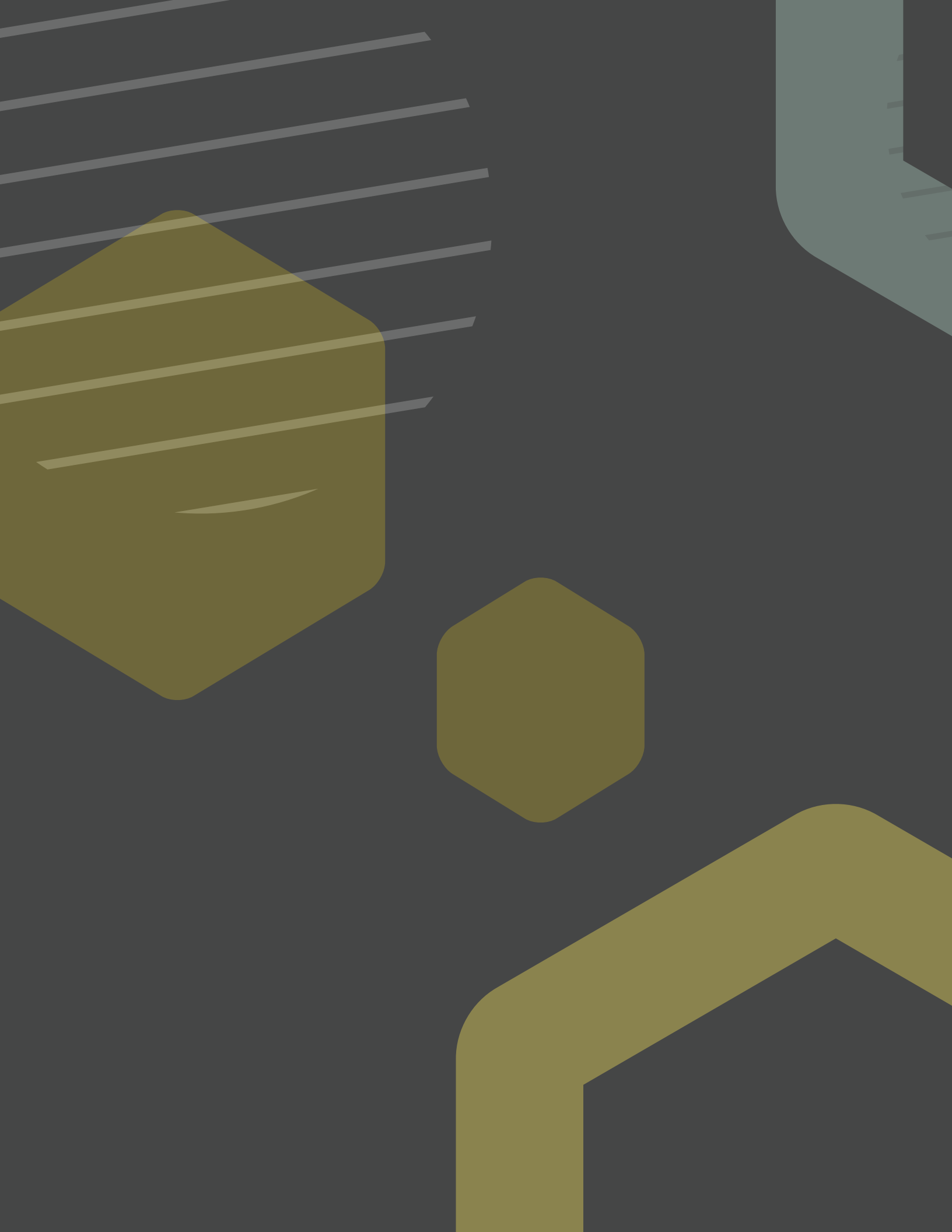
Recommendations to Support Increased Transportation Options		Implementor
6.5	Install bike facilities along high-traffic corridors and connect them with the larger regional bikeway network.	DDOT
6.6	Install micro mobility stations for scooters and bikes at locations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepherd Parkway • Oxon Run Parkway • Major intersections along Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE • Major intersections along Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE 	DDOT
6.7	Explore options for additional transit subsidies for Metrorail and bus services for low-income residents.	DDOT, WMATA
6.8	Explore options for after hours transit services, especially for service and entertainment industry workers.	DDOT, WMATA
6.9	Encourage electric vehicle charging stations in the development of parking facilities, at auto-service stations, at grocery stores, at recreation sites, and in other locations as appropriate.	DDOT, Property Owners/Developers, DGS, Events DC, NPS

Figure 6.2. Implement complete streets and pedestrian networks






This diagram identifies streets and pedestrian links that can begin to stitch together the neighborhood, reduce congestion on major corridors, and support walkability and a sense of safety.

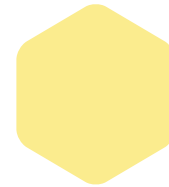
- POTENTIAL NEW VEHICULAR AND MULTIMODAL LINKS
- - - IMPROVED CYCLIST AND/OR PEDESTRIAN LINKS



DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

The following development guide is a summary of recommendations that can be implemented through private development, the PUD process or to develop RFPs for the disposition and redevelopment of public lands in the CHSAP planning area.

	<p>Maximize the amount of affordable housing, especially family housing, multigenerational housing, and senior housing, through the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process and the development of District-owned land. (Policy 1.2)</p>
	<p>Support increased residential density and infill of underused, vacant, and institutional sites to allow a wider variety of ownership opportunities in residential neighborhoods that align with the Comprehensive Plan. (Policy 1.3)</p>
	<p>Support increased density along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE corridor to support Medium Density Mixed-Use development. (Policy 1.4)</p>
	<p>Prioritize fresh food retail in new development projects and through the PUD or RFP process. (Policy 3.1)</p>
	<p>Increase access to childcare facilities, incentivize expanded programming, and provide support to families with caregivers who work outside of typical office hours. (Policy 3.9)</p>
	<p>Increase passive and active green space throughout the community through Playable Art investments, PUDs, and District RFPs. (Policy 5.8)</p>
	<p>Develop sites adjacent to parks, plazas, and streets along Alabama Avenue SE, Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE, according to the Building Frontage Design Guidelines. (Policy 5.9)</p>
	<p>Develop additional dedicated off-street parking and loading areas, shared parking at St. Elizabeths East, and improved wayfinding to parking along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue SE business corridor. (Policy 6.4)</p>
	<p>Encourage electric vehicle charging stations in the development of parking facilities, at auto-service stations, at grocery stores, at recreation sites, and in other locations as appropriate. (Policy 6.9)</p>



IMPLEMENTATION

The SAP will be implemented through private redevelopment and public investment, led by government agencies, private property owners, and community partners.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Following Council adoption of the Plan, future physical changes in the built environment will mainly occur through private redevelopment and public investments. Many of the recommendations in the CHSAP will be implemented through property redevelopment and improvements to public rights-of-way. Improvements to streetscapes, enhanced urban design, high-quality architecture, enhanced sustainability measures, and affordable housing can be addressed as part of the redevelopment process.

The timing for the redevelopment of individual properties is contingent on market conditions and a myriad of public and private decisions. Market conditions are often cyclical, so physical changes in the built environment can sometimes appear to occur in waves. While the construction of new buildings can sometimes seem swift, the site planning, financing, and

permitting for these projects takes years of preliminary work that often goes unseen.

Public investments also take time and typically begin with budget allocations for planning and design. Redevelopment of the Congress Heights Community Center will begin following final design delivery in 2022. The new full-service library will begin the public design process in 2022 and is planned for construction in 2025.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

While OP led the development of the CHSAP from inception through Council adoption, other District agencies and Federal agency partners will implement the CHSAP recommendations through construction projects, funding streams, regulatory processes, and operating programs. OP monitors the progress of CHSAP recommendations and advocates for its





implementation whenever possible.

Approval authorities play an important role in the CHSAP's implementation as venues for discretionary decisions on development and public space improvements. The Zoning Commission, Historic Preservation Review Board, Public Space Committee, National Capital Planning Commission, and Commission of Fine Arts, are all potential approval authorities that would weigh in on a prospective change in the built environment. These bodies operate within their defined purview and processes, with varying levels of public involvement depending on the type of application they are reviewing. Approval authorities are not proactive: they are charged with deliberating on applications submitted for their review.

The Zoning Commission will review Zoning Map Amendments and PUDs that are key to implementing the CHSAP. Zoning changes are typically initiated by property owners for their respective sites, whereby OP and relevant partner agencies review these applications and submit reports to the Zoning Commission. Community partners also have an important role to play in Zoning Commission cases, and are encouraged to provide comment.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS

As advocates and stewards of the neighborhood, community partners play an important role in implementing the CHSAP. ANCs, community and civic associations, the Main Street organization, and others were thoughtful contributors to the CHSAP's development and are key to its ultimate success. Community partners implement the Plan's recommendations through community programming and events, activating and stewarding public spaces, supporting social and economic initiatives, providing services to discreet and vulnerable populations, advocating for future studies, and participating in public processes for discretionary development applications.

APPLICATION OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Building Frontage Design Guidelines can be used by the following approval authorities and groups:

- The Zoning Commission in their review of PUDs, or in the review of custom zoning for the area.
- The Public Space Committee in their review of temporary and permanent uses of public space.

- The ANC and other community groups in reviewing development applications.
- The Destination Congress Heights Main Street organization in considering grants or other programs aimed to improve building facades and commercial sidewalks.

DISTRICT RESOURCES

District agencies have produced many online and printed resources for developers, community partners, and agency staff to help inspire new projects, track progress, and fund policy priorities. Here are a list of helpful guides, manuals, maps, dashboards, and local funding sources that will be instrumental helping to implement the Plan's recommendations in future years:

Affordable Housing:

- [The Housing Production Trust Fund](#)
- [DHCD's Consolidated RFPs](#)
- [Housing Equity Report](#)

Business Development

- [A Comprehensive Commercial Leasing Guide](#)
- [Makers & Creatives Toolkit](#)
- [DC Doing Business Guide](#)

Development and Zoning

- [DC Interactive Zoning Map](#)
- [DC Zoning Handbook](#)

Historic Preservation

- [How to Apply for Listing in the DC Inventory](#)

Public Space Activation and Design:

- [Our City, Our Spaces!](#)
- [Public Space Activation & Stewardship Guide](#)
- [Public Realm Design Manual](#)
- [Commemorative Works Program](#)

Sustainability

- [Building Energy Performance Handbook](#)





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Developing the CHSAP was a collective effort. OP thanks the following stakeholders, project team members, and consultants for their hard work and contributions to the plan.

District of Columbia

Muriel Bowser, Mayor

District of Columbia Council

Trayon White, Councilmember for Ward 8

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8C, 8D, and 8E

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Commissioner Olivia L. Henderson, ANC 8D (Chair)

Commissioner Brittany Geneva Cummings, ANC 8E, (Chair)

Community Advisory Committee

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Commissioner Salim Adofo, ANC 8C (Chair)

Commissioner Olivia L. Henderson, ANC 8D (Chair) and Washington Highlands Civic Association

Commissioner Brittany Geneva Cummings, ANC 8E, (Chair)

Monica Ray, Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corporation

Wendell Quann, Destination Congress Heights

Keyonna Jones, Congress Heights Arts and Culture Center

Shakita McBroom, Congress Park Tenant Association

Jaren Hill, DC Greens

Absalom Jordan, Friends of Oxon Run Park, Chair

Garrison Graham, Youth Community, Boys and Girls Club

Guleford Bob, Senior Community

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Consultant Support

Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corporation
EL Studio, LLC
LINK Strategic Partners
Center for Urban and Racial Equity
Seaberry Design and Communications
Cunningham | Quill Architects, LLC

Other Support

Mustafa Abdul-Salam, Ward 8 Economic Development Partnership
Bobby Boone, &Access



Credit: Salim Adofo

