



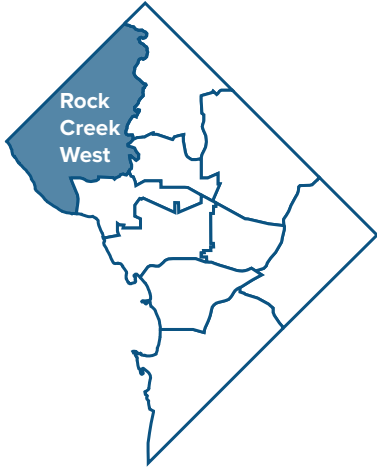
# WISCONSIN AVENUE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

FEBRUARY 2024

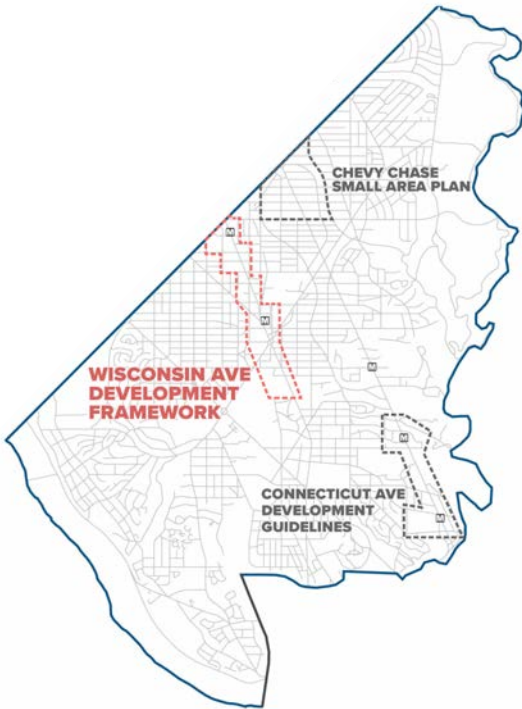
District of Columbia  
Office of Planning



Rock Creek West is one of 10 planning areas in the District of Columbia. All streets discussed in this document are in the NW quadrant, unless noted otherwise.



The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework is an action to implement land use and housing policies outlined in the 2021 amendment to the District's Comprehensive Plan and the Rock Creek West Roadmap.





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# Executive Summary

The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework provides guidance for zoning changes consistent with the District's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). These changes will deliver needed housing units on this high-opportunity, mixed-use corridor. Up to 9,500 new housing units on the Wisconsin Avenue corridor could be produced as a result of these changes, of which 1,700 could be dedicated affordable.

This Development Framework applies to over 100 development sites along a 1.5-mile segment of Wisconsin Avenue with a focus on Friendship Heights and Tenleytown-AU Metro station areas. Consistent with the Comp Plan, this Development Framework envisions a corridor of well-designed blocks that create walkable urban places with new mixed-income housing and active ground floor uses. The Development Framework also recommends the design and activation of new public spaces, providing opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to enjoy.

This Development Framework implements land use and housing policies outlined in the 2021 amendment to the Comp Plan and the Rock Creek West Roadmap. This Development Framework recommends the full use of height and density allowed in the Comp Plan to achieve policy priorities for more equitable development, leveraging tools like Inclusionary Zoning (IZ).

The study area covers mixed-use properties along the corridor from Western Avenue at the Maryland border down to Rodman Street. Development and public realm recommendations provide benefits for existing and new residents:

- More activity and reconfigured retail blocks sustaining diverse and walkable commercial nodes.
- 80% of new residential capacity is located within 1/4-mile (a 10-minute walk) of the two Metro stations, supporting walkability and transit ridership.
- 4.5x the number of dedicated affordable housing units compared to current zoning, providing housing options for a range of household compositions and income levels, concentrated near Metro stations, parks, jobs, and civic amenities.



*A development concept for the study area with new buildings concentrated around the Friendship Heights and Tenleytown-AU Metro stations (dotted red lines depict 1/4-mile radius around stations).*



The Comp Plan's vision for equitable development is expressed through four guiding principles for the corridor:



**Prioritize housing, especially affordable housing, supported by active retail, restaurants, and cultural and entertainment uses.**



**Design public spaces to encourage walkability, connectivity, and access to transit.**

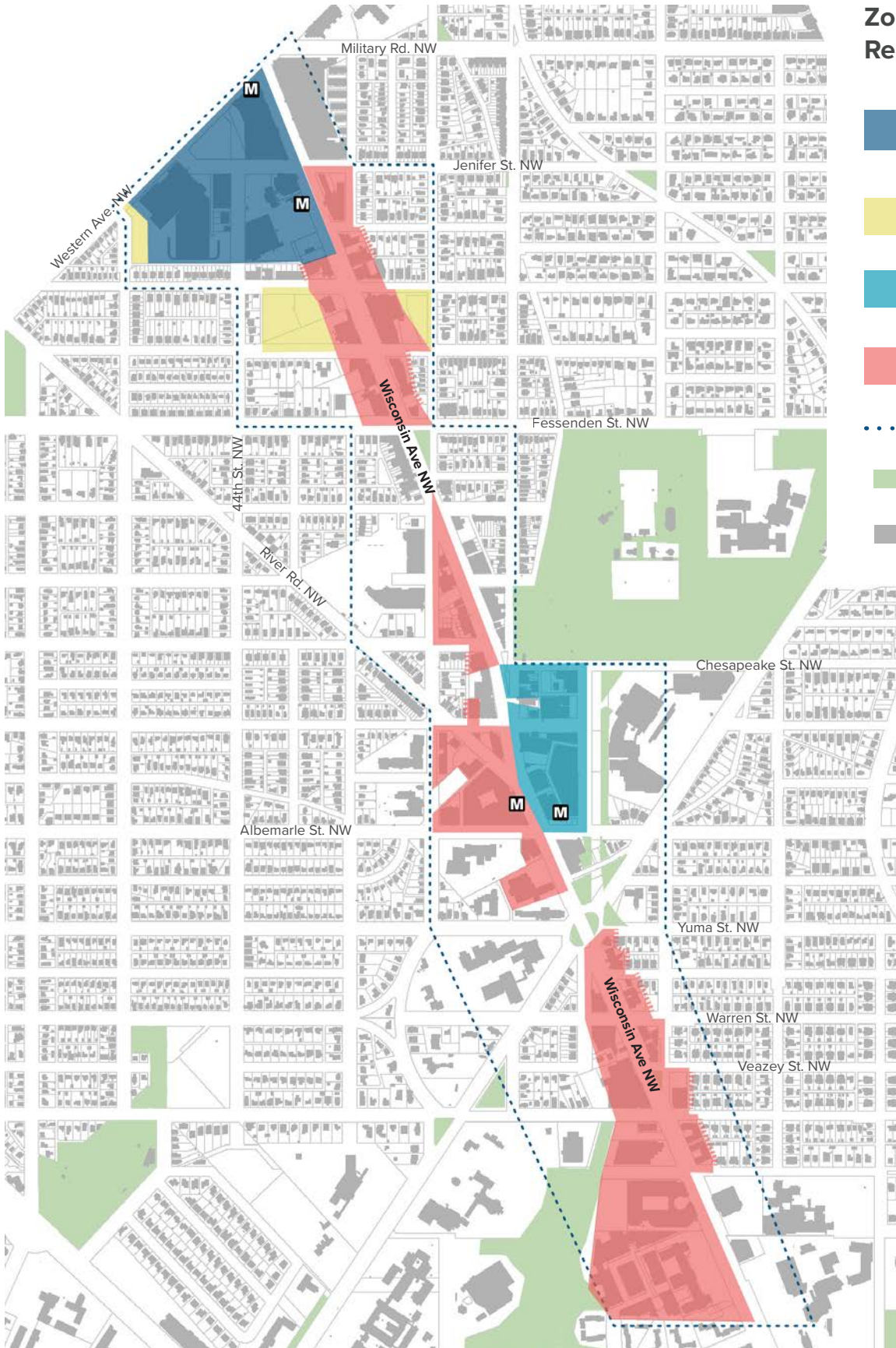


**Design building massing and height to complement neighborhood context and emphasize local landmarks.**



**Design buildings to maximize availability, variety, flexibility, and sustainability of housing and retail.**





## Zoning Recommendations

- Friendship Heights Metro Zone (High-Density)
- Friendship Heights Transition Zone (Moderate-Density)
- Tenleytown Metro Zone (High-Density)
- Mixed-Use Corridor Zone (Medium-Density)
- Study Area
- Parks (District and Federal)
- Building Footprints



The recommendations in this Development Framework will be implemented through private development and public investment, led by public agencies, property owners, and community groups, over several years. The first step is rezoning the corridor to provide more flexibility for future property development with clarity in outcome and process for community stakeholders and property owners alike.

The Development Framework recommends four zoning categories for the corridor utilizing heights and densities permitted under the Comp Plan ranging from moderate-density residential to high-density mixed-use. To achieve its urban design vision, the Development Framework recommends Design Review for the two high-density mixed-use areas near the Friendship Heights and Tenleytown-AU Metro stations. Elsewhere on the corridor, this Development Framework recommends zoning for moderate-density residential or medium-density mixed-use, to be developed as a matter of right. A Planned Unit Development (PUD) would also be an available option in all four zones.

Each property owner will implement the recommendations in the Development Framework for plazas, pedestrian passages, or shared streets on private property at their discretion. The DC Office of Planning (OP) will work relevant guidelines for these features into the zoning text, where possible. Streetscaping improvements in the public right-of-way will come with individual developments, approved as necessary by the Public Space Committee.

## Development Framework Implementors

Cross-stakeholder collaboration between public and private sector actors is necessary to implement the recommendations in the Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework, intended to be used by:

- **Property owners** seeking commercial tenants, making exterior building improvements, and undertaking large-scale redevelopments;
- **OP** when considering zoning changes for the Wisconsin Avenue corridor and reviewing Zoning Commission (ZC) and Large Tract Review cases;
- The **ZC** in its evaluation of future zoning map amendments, Design Review cases, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs);
- The **Public Space Committee** in its review of temporary and permanent uses of public space;
- The **Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB)** in its review of development proposals affecting historically landmarked buildings;
- The **Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs)** and other community groups in reviewing development applications or public realm projects;
- The **Friendship Heights Alliance** and **Tenleytown Main Street** when marketing the corridor's commercial nodes, convening local stakeholders, and activating public spaces;
- **District and federal agencies** considering public investments and planning to accommodate projected growth along the corridor;
- **District agencies and Council** when evaluating public street or alley closures or dedications; and
- **The District and National Park Service (NPS)** when considering transfers of jurisdiction for parkland.

# Introduction

The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework supports Comp Plan goals of housing equity, commercial success and sustainability, and enhancing a sense of place through thoughtful urban design. The Development Framework’s recommendations are flexible in their application as development will occur incrementally over several years.

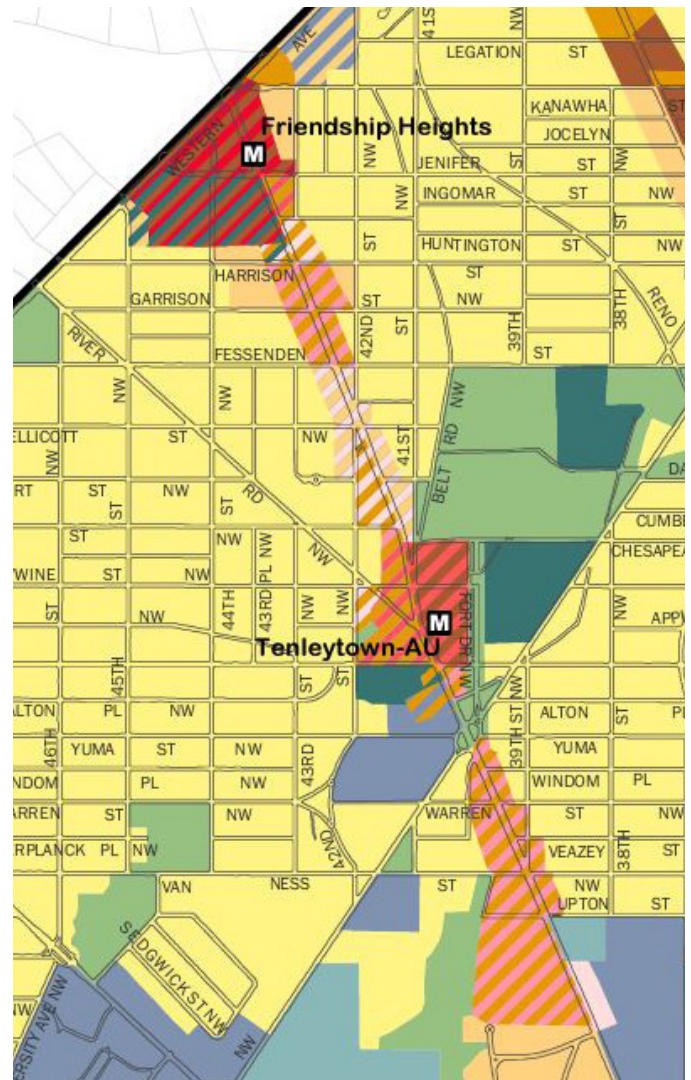
This Development Framework considers independent development sites of varied size and ownership in a coordinated way to encourage well-designed blocks that create walkable urban nodes. Development recommendations of the Comp Plan and this Development Framework related to building heights, densities, uses, and forms will be codified through new zoning designations. With residential demand driving change along Wisconsin Avenue, supportive retail and cultural uses will be delivered through redevelopment. This Development Framework provides recommendations for their types, sizes, and prioritized locations along the corridor.

The Development Framework’s recommendations will support a vibrant public life for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. The Development Framework identifies locations and types of new public spaces and how their design and activation can be delivered. This will occur through private development and coordinated by commercial management districts in partnership with applicable public agencies such as the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the District Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and NPS.

## Implementing the Comp Plan

The Comp Plan guides future growth and development in the District. The District amended the Comp Plan in 2021 to allow greater heights and densities in mixed-use development within the Rock Creek West (RCW) Planning Area in support of citywide housing equity goals. The Development Framework advances implementation of these land use and housing policies with a focus on urban design that guides future changes to the built environment.

OP will advance zoning informed by this Development Framework to encourage height and density allowed in the Comp Plan to achieve policy priorities for more equitable development, leveraging tools like Inclusionary Zoning (IZ). To achieve its urban design vision, the Development Framework recommends Design Review for the two high-density mixed-use areas near the Friendship Heights and Tenleytown-AU Metro stations. Moderate- and medium-density areas elsewhere on the corridor could be developed as a matter of right. PUDs would be an available option along the entire corridor.



The Future Land Use Map in the Comp Plan envisions mixed-use development at mostly high and medium densities along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor in the study area.



## SUPPORTING RETAIL AND CULTURE ON THE CORRIDOR

Wisconsin Avenue has enjoyed a long history of commercial activity, prominence as a multimodal arterial corridor, an engaged community, with existing legacy office and retail uses. However, a highly competitive retail and commercial environment has evolved in the District and suburbs, with development in nearby Bethesda, Maryland and other District neighborhoods attracting retailers, entertainment options and other businesses. As a result, Wisconsin Avenue has struggled in recent years to maintain its position as a regional and luxury retail destination and has become primarily neighborhood-serving.

However, the changing conditions also present opportunities. With the decreased demand for office space in particular, Wisconsin Avenue is poised for growth in multifamily residential buildings, which will be accomplished through conversions and redevelopment. This transition will be supported by rightsizing retail, restaurant, and other neighborhood services and introducing new arts, culture, and entertainment uses.

Friendship Heights can redefine its role from a regional shopping destination to a node with a balance of regional and neighborhood-oriented offerings. Compared to other communities, Friendship Heights has limited existing arts and cultural assets. As redevelopment continues, property owners should explore opportunities to activate existing vacant retail spaces and prioritize permanent cultural spaces. In recent years, the Friendship Heights Alliance and ANC 3E have prioritized local, woman- and minority-owned businesses to provide more diverse and inclusive offerings on the corridor.

Tenleytown can further strengthen its significant cluster of civic and educational institutions as a social and commercial hub for thousands of school-aged children and their families. As the civic commons for both the study area and broader Rock Creek West community, this approach can also help Tenleytown continue to grow its retail prominence as a midpoint between Georgetown and Bethesda.



*A movie theater is a popular anchor at Bethesda Row, about 1.5 miles north of Friendship Heights. Source: coopercarry.com.*



*Formed in 2022, the Friendship Heights Alliance has been activating Wisconsin Avenue with events featuring local artists and vendors. Source: Albert Ting for Friendship Heights Alliance*



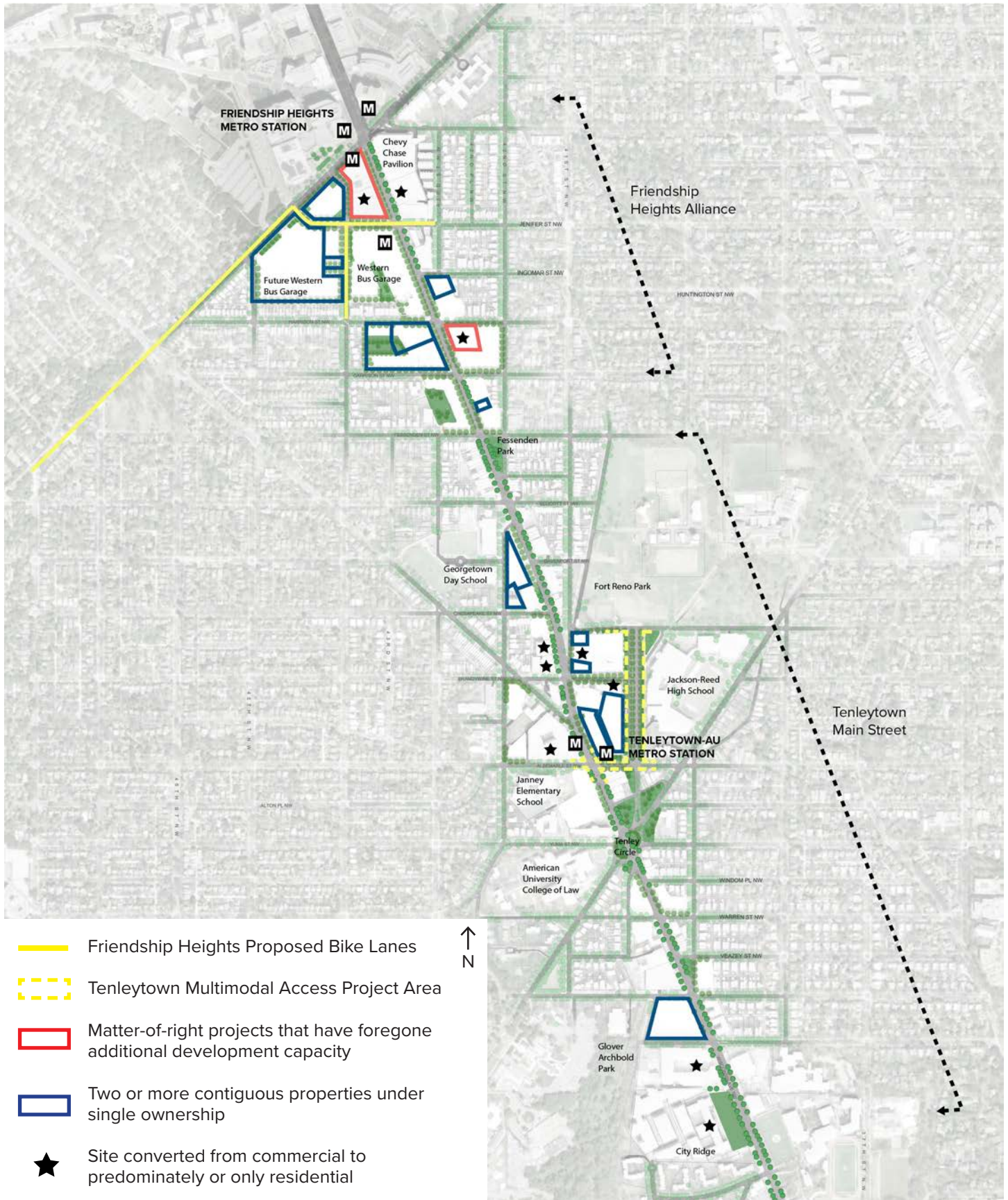
*Tenley / Friendship Library is an important civic anchor in Tenleytown.*






## DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

The following conditions characterized the development context in the study area at the end of 2023. These conditions informed the recommendations of this Development Framework.

1. Property ownership is mostly dispersed, with some owners in control of two or more contiguous properties, forming larger development sites in 12 distinct clusters. In contrast to some areas of the District, independent owners, rather than a master developer, will implement the Development Framework.
2. Private institutions, families, or trusts—with limited engagement in re-envisioning of their underused sites—control many of the properties along the corridor.
3. Some property owners have foregone additional development capacity due to associated costs of delay and risk of litigation related to discretionary approvals, such as PUDs.
4. Since 2005, 10 sites converting commercial use to predominately or only residential have been completed, are under construction, or approved on the corridor. Combined, these projects account for over 2,700 homes, in some cases replacing significant office and retail square footage.
5. Commercial management organizations have a growing presence along the corridor, offering opportunities to convene commercial stakeholders, develop placemaking strategies, and manage shared public spaces;
  - Tenleytown Main Street was formed in 2016 and expanded its boundary south to include the City Ridge development in 2022.
  - Friendship Heights Alliance was formed in 2022 as a unique cross-jurisdictional place-management organization, incorporated as a Business Improvement District in DC and an Urban District in Montgomery County, MD.
6. There is increased community support for affordable housing in RCW by local organizations focused on this high opportunity area.
7. Transportation investments supporting multimodal mobility options, shaping public space use and urban form over the next decade include:
  - DDOT will install protected bike lanes on Western Avenue and Jenifer Street in Friendship Heights, establishing safe and comfortable bike access from the west (estimated completion 2024).
  - WMATA identified the former Lord and Taylor site as the proposed location for a new Western Bus Garage in Friendship Heights; WMATA anticipates the garage to serve an all-electric fleet (completion pending Metro board approval and technical/financial feasibility).
  - DDOT's Tenleytown Multimodal Access Project will establish a preferred concept for the transit transfer area and public plaza on 40th Street and Fort Drive (concept in 2024, completion pending future funding).





-  Friendship Heights Proposed Bike Lanes
-  Tenleytown Multimodal Access Project Area
-  Matter-of-right projects that have foregone additional development capacity
-  Two or more contiguous properties under single ownership
-  Site converted from commercial to predominately or only residential



# EQUITABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

## Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) and Inclusionary Zoning Plus (IZ+) in Rock Creek West

A more equitable housing strategy for Wisconsin Avenue aims to increase the types of rental and ownership housing through regulatory tools and targeted financial incentives that implement land use changes and policy updates made in the 2021 Comp Plan.

As a regulatory tool, IZ complements financial tools to support the creation of dedicated affordable housing and achieve the Mayor’s Housing Equity goals. Specifically, IZ contributes to a more geographically equitable distribution of dedicated affordable housing in the District, playing an outsized role in RCW, where other forms of dedicated affordable housing are mostly absent. RCW has the lowest number of dedicated affordable homes of the District’s 10 planning areas.

Affordable housing units produced through IZ are not publicly subsidized, but rather, are cross-subsidized by market-rate units within the building. An associated density bonus is provided to offset the premium required to cross-subsidize the IZ units, with an affordable set-aside between 8% to 12.5% of the building’s residential square footage. IZ provides socio-economic diversity within new buildings by including moderate income households but is not designed to target more deeply affordable housing for households below 50% median family income (MFI). Most IZ units require maximum MFIs of 60% for rental and 80% for ownership, with a smaller number at 50%. Deeper affordability below 50% MFI can be supported through financial programs administered at the local and federal levels.

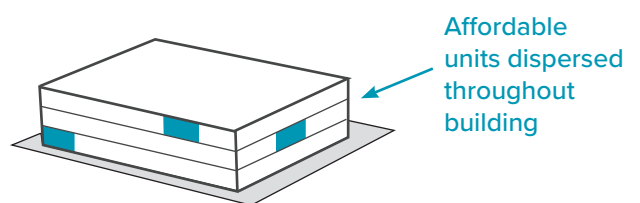
The Zoning Commission adopted IZ+ in 2021 to achieve higher affordability set asides than the District’s regular IZ program when properties receive a change in zoning that permits greater density, consistent with the Comp Plan. The IZ+ affordable set-aside can be up to 18% or 20%, depending on the amount of additional density and a building’s construction type.

### How Does IZ+ Work?

Affordable set-aside requirements increase after a rezoning that increases residential density, measured in Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The scenario below demonstrates how IZ+ works in a hypothetical change in zoning.

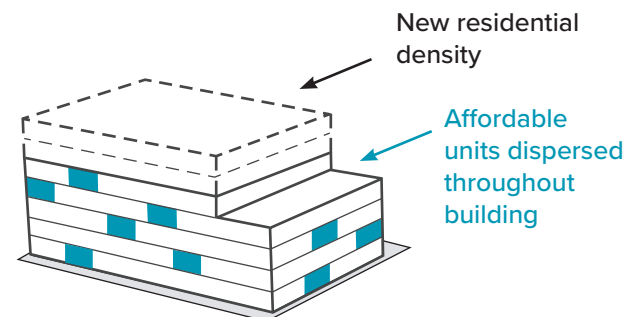
#### Old Zone (IZ)

3.0 FAR  
10% Affordable Set-Aside



#### New Zone (IZ+)

5.4 New FAR  
20% New Affordable Set-Aside



### What is Median Family Income (MFI)?

The Washington Statistical Area MFI is published annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, at which half of households have income above that level and half below. In 2022, 100% MFI in the Washington Area by household size is:

One-Person Household	\$99,600
Two-Person Household	\$113,850
Three-Person Household	\$128,050
Four-Person Household	\$142,300



## Sustaining and Attracting Families

Housing units with three or more bedrooms can meet the needs of larger households, providing options for families. However, only 5% of all multifamily units produced in RCW since 2000 have three or more bedrooms. Along Wisconsin Avenue in particular, large multifamily buildings skew heavily towards one-bedroom units.

Smaller residential buildings tend to include more units with three or more bedrooms but are less likely to trigger current IZ regulations (which are applicable to buildings with 10 or more units). Wisconsin Avenue's large development lots with multiple street frontages provide the design flexibility to support more multi-bedroom units and will be subject to IZ. Buildings on these sites can be designed to carefully frame new public spaces with more corners and exterior-facing walls providing the window exposure required for bedrooms.

Three-bedroom market-rate units in new multifamily buildings are likely to be expensive on a square foot basis but should be less expensive than the area's single-family homes. New multifamily buildings are the main opportunity to expand the diversity of housing opportunities to serve both larger and lower income households through IZ and financial subsidies along Wisconsin Avenue.

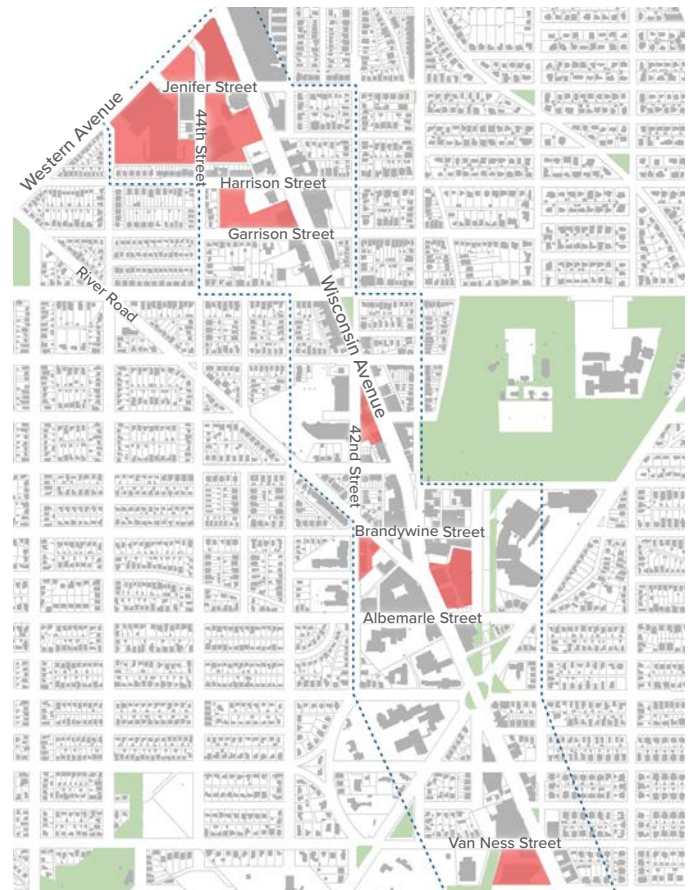


The triangular Modos building in Petworth was designed with entirely three-bedroom, 2-bathroom units. Of the building's 17 units, two are IZ. Source: Communitythree.com.

Families are attracted to residential buildings with other families and family-supportive amenities, such as:

- Ample and conveniently accessible storage spaces for strollers, bikes, and other outdoor equipment;
- Indoor common spaces for family gathering, such as a library, small kitchen, or play area;
- Fitness center with equipment for adult use and child supervision;
- Outdoor common spaces, such as a rooftop garden, terrace, or playground;
- A swimming pool;
- On-site childcare, especially for very young children; and
- Pet-friendly facilities for grooming and exercise.

The greater proportion of families that live on the corridor, the greater the demand there will be for family- and neighborhood-serving retail spaces, supporting Wisconsin Avenue's ongoing transformation.



Large sites in the study area (highlighted in red) with multiple street frontages could accommodate a greater share of units with three or more bedrooms.

# Corridor Plan

## Three Focus Areas on the Corridor

The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework focuses on three areas along the 1.5-mile corridor; Friendship Heights, Tenleytown, and the area south of Tenley Circle. The recommendations for these focus areas are based on analysis of specific sites, which have the potential to provide mixed-income housing supported by vibrant commercial, retail, and cultural uses.



### FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

Wisconsin Avenue from Western Avenue at the Maryland border down to Fessenden Street, including the Friendship Heights Metro station area and blocks around Jenifer and 44th Streets.



### TENLEYTOWN

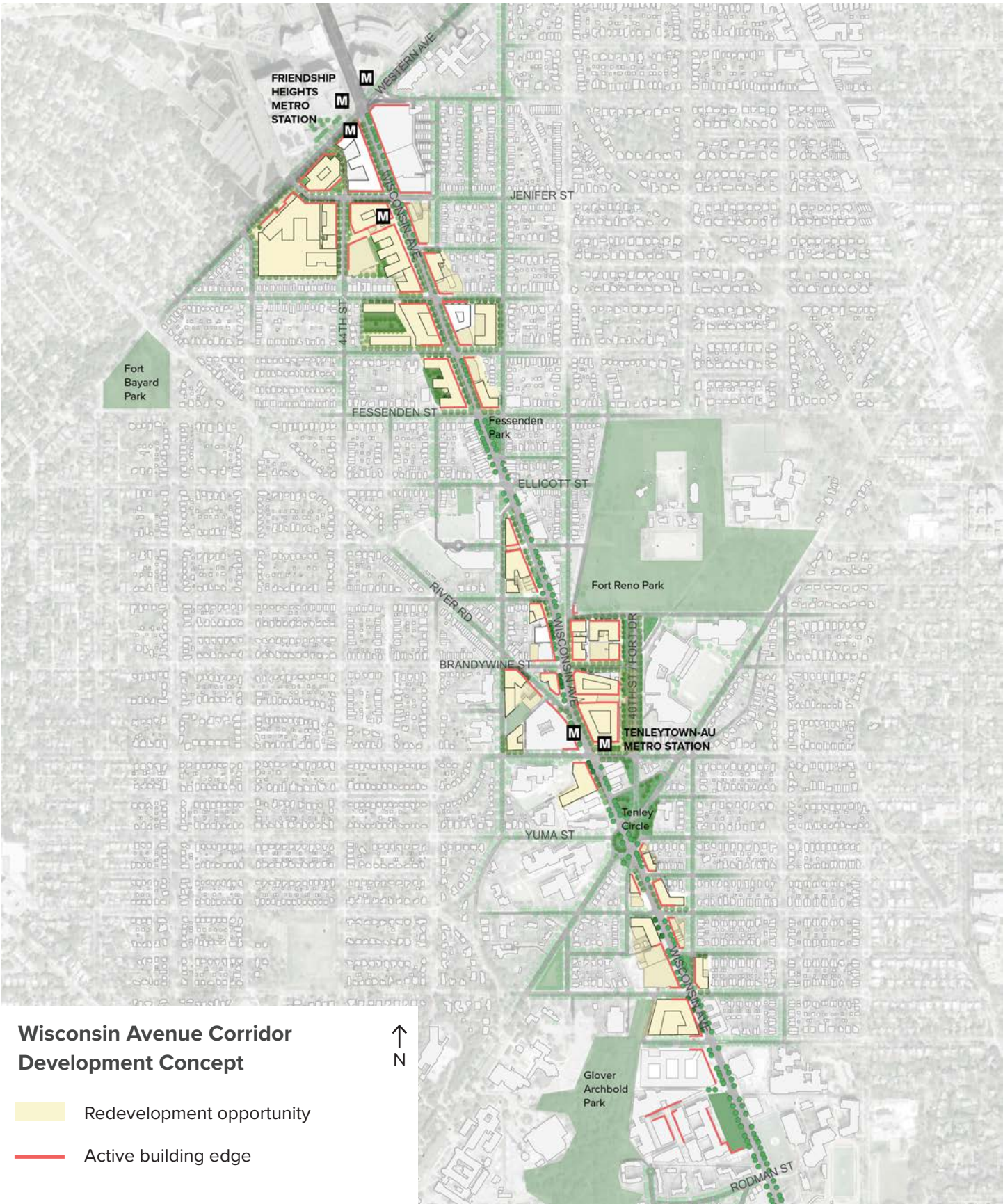
Wisconsin Avenue from Ellicott Street down to Yuma Street at Tenley Circle, including the Tenleytown-AU Metro station area and blocks around 40th Street / Fort Drive, Brandywine Street, and River Road.



### SOUTH OF TENLEY CIRCLE

Wisconsin Avenue from Yuma Street down to Rodman Street south of Tenley Circle.







## FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE CORRIDOR

**Prioritize housing, especially affordable housing, supported by active retail, restaurants, and cultural and entertainment uses.**

Recommendations:

- Develop housing as the principal use along the corridor.
- Prioritize retail stores and restaurants as key supporting uses, serving local and city-wide residents and activating public spaces.
- Incorporate small office tenants such as medical or accounting as occupants in flexibly-designed buildings.
- Include education-supportive uses that serve the large population of elementary, high school, and university students in the area, such as housing, casual food-related retail, and other amenities.
- Complement the mix of residential and commercial uses with cultural and entertainment uses, leveraging large development site opportunities where feasible.
- Design open spaces for social interaction and inclusive gatherings, incorporating public open spaces in the redevelopment of key opportunity sites.
- Minimize parking associated with redevelopment; design it to be located below grade while prioritizing comfortable pedestrian movements.



*A diversity of housing types is the priority on Wisconsin Avenue. Source: teeplearch.com.*



*The repurposed Stone's Warehouse activates the public realm outside the Transfer Company Food Hall in in Raleigh, NC. Source: clearscapes.com.*



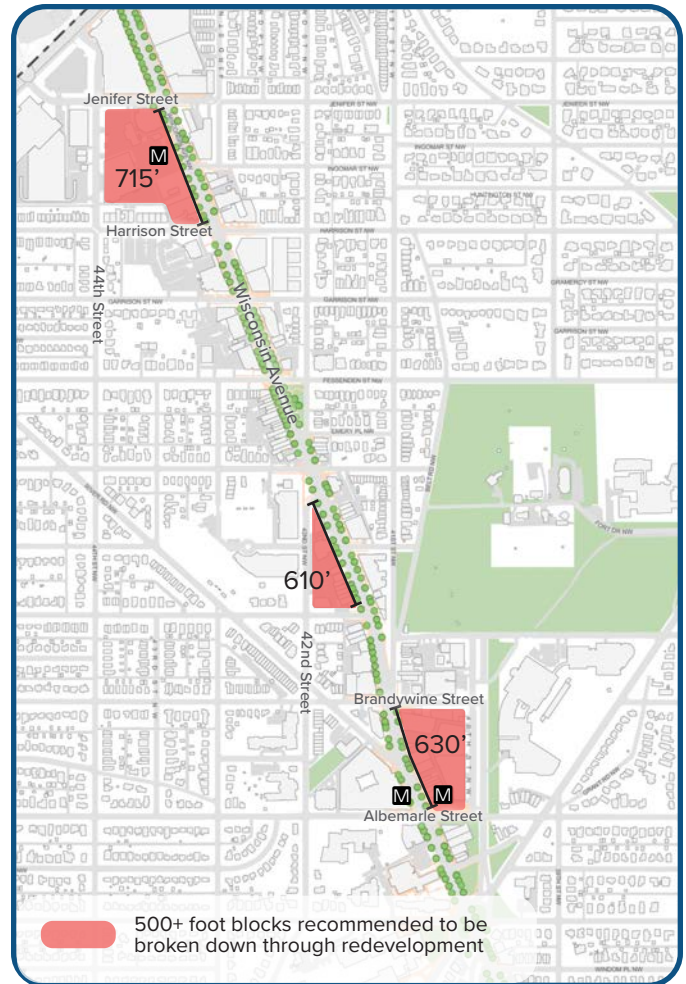
*The pedestrian passages at CityCenter DC are activated with storefronts, seating, and public art. Source: ggnltd.com.*



## Design public spaces to encourage walkability, connectivity, and access to transit.

### Recommendations:

- Break down the mass of superblocks (blocks over 500 feet in length) with new shared streets, plazas, or pedestrian-only passages.
- Activate Wisconsin Avenue’s streetscape and adjoining side streets and pedestrian passages with storefronts, smaller food-based businesses, seating, vegetation, and public art.
- Design a building’s streetwall to a minimum of 15 feet in height. Incorporate interesting and transparent storefronts and building lobby entries to activate the sidewalk, making use of building projections to accentuate façades.
- Focus retail, restaurants, building lobbies, and other active uses on Wisconsin Avenue and key side streets (Jenifer and 44th streets in Friendship Heights; Albemarle, Brandywine, Chesapeake, 40th, and 41st streets in Tenleytown) to activate the public realm.
- Concentrate retail in walkable retail priority nodes around Friendship Heights Metro Station, Tenleytown-AU Metro Station, and the 4900 block of Wisconsin Avenue.
- Locate retail entrances at grade with the sidewalk; maximum storefront widths should be 40 feet or 25 feet in walkable retail priority nodes.
- Support vibrant retail by improving conditions for people walking and biking along the corridor, especially crossing Wisconsin Avenue.
- Reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflicts by eliminating curb cuts and applying traffic calming along Wisconsin Avenue.



*Superblocks exceeding 500 feet in length along Wisconsin Avenue should be broken down through future development, in particular the 4500-block (east side), 4800-block (west side), and 5200-block (west side).*

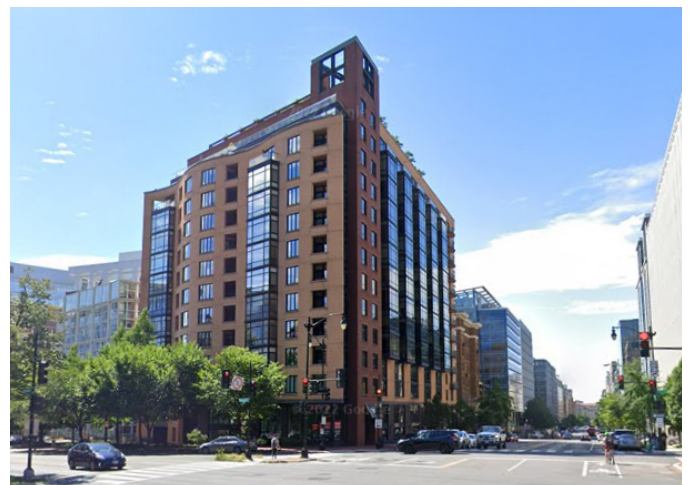
## Design building massing and height to complement neighborhood context and emphasize local landmarks.

### Recommendations:

- Place and design buildings to open up sidewalk-level views that highlight key neighborhood landmarks.
- Use tower projections on buildings to enhance prominent intersections or corners along Wisconsin Avenue.
- Break down long horizontal building façades through vertical and horizontal divisions, bays, setbacks, and other design approaches.
- Transition building scale, massing, and height along Comp Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) boundaries from higher density areas to abutting low-density residential areas.
- Design and orient the shape and massing of buildings to maximize energy efficiency, increase access to light and air, and capture interesting views or vistas.



*Buildings framing the pedestrian-only Pearl Street at the DC Wharf create a view terminus of the Jefferson Middle School chimney, emphasizing sense of place for the new development.*



*A tower projection accentuates the corner intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and 10th Street.*



*The massing of the Liz steps down to lower scale buildings off of 14th Street. Source: corecdc.com*



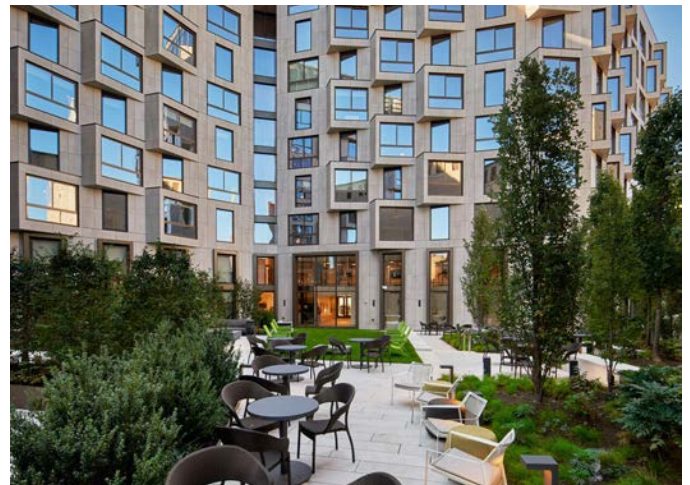
**Design buildings to maximize the availability, variety, flexibility, and sustainability of housing and retail.**

Recommendations:

- Include balconies, terraces, and other private outdoor spaces for residents.
- Modulate building massing to increase corners and accommodate more three-bedroom units.
- Design buildings to be attractive to a range of household types and sizes, including families with children and older adults.
- Use courtyards and/or elevated terraces to provide light, air, vegetation, and amenities.
- Prioritize upper level building rooftops for housing, residential amenity space, green roofs, and solar panels.
- Activate second level rooftop terraces with café seating to complement street-level public life.
- Increase the availability of smaller storefronts (under 2,000 square feet); where possible, activate the ground floor with smaller food-based businesses.



*The building massing of 555 E Street SW is articulated with both horizontal and vertical breaks, accommodating balconies and terraces at various levels.*



*A lush courtyard is a valued residential amenity while angled building projections increase views and privacy in units at the Silva building on Columbia Road. Source: coredc.com.*



*Galleries, restaurants, and small storefronts line the 8th Street facade of the Atlantic Plumbing building. Source: ma.com.*

# CORRIDOR-WIDE PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES

## Open Space Opportunities

The study area hosts a range of open spaces today; large federally-owned parks like Fort Reno Park and Glover Archbold Park, local public spaces like Fessenden Park, and publicly accessible private open spaces like the playground at Georgetown Day School and the Great Lawn at City Ridge. Complementing these spaces, this Development Framework recommends plazas and playgrounds to support future growth and development at key locations on the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, connected by an enhanced streetscape. Open space opportunities on the corridor include:

- In Friendship Heights, a plaza is needed to serve as a central gathering place, ideally located on 44th Street. If development is not feasible above the proposed Western Bus Garage, a full-sized recreational field should be explored for its large roof area.
- In Tenleytown, improvements to 40th Street/ Fort Drive can be designed as a central transit and civic plaza framed by the high school and aquatic center on the east and future high-density mixed-use on the west, while providing a consistent north-south connection between Fort Reno Park and Tenley Circle.
- South of Tenley Circle, Veazey Triangle Park can be activated by community groups, similar to Fessenden Park.

The Wisconsin Avenue streetscape will be a more socially active and greener place that is comfortable and accessible for people of all ages and abilities. Organizations like the Tenleytown Main Street and Friendship Heights Alliance will continue to facilitate green and artistic improvements in the streetscape while hosting sidewalk festivals and community events. More densely built blocks along Wisconsin Avenue and adjacent streets will increase the number of competing commercial-serving curbside needs. Centralized and accessible off-street parking serving retail nodes will reduce the need for curb cuts and provide predictability for those arriving by car.



*Fessenden Park on Wisconsin Avenue.*



*Activated public open space at Capitol Riverfront.*



*New public open space was part of the Sursum Corda redevelopment.*



## Places to Play and Gather

Opportunities for family-oriented play for all ages and physical abilities should be incorporated into existing and future open spaces on the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. Playgrounds, sculptural play elements, open space and lawns, skateparks, and both temporary or permanent interactive art offer memorable experiences for children and families. Potential locations for play include:

- The landscaped setback on 45th Street along the west wall of the proposed bus garage;
- The roof of the proposed bus garage;
- The west side redevelopment opportunity on the 5100-block of Wisconsin Avenue;
- Fessenden Park;
- The east side redevelopment opportunity on the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue;
- The triangular green space on Chesapeake Street between Jackson-Reed High School and Fort Reno Park;
- Veazey Triangle Park; and
- The Great Lawn at City Ridge.

## Shared Streets

Shared streets prioritize pedestrians but allow access for vehicles operating at low speeds and are designed to permit easy loading and unloading for trucks at designated hours. They are designed to slow or divert traffic with pedestrian activity, landscaping, differing surface materials and striping, and other cues. A shared street is sometimes called a woonerf, a Dutch term meaning ‘living street.’

In commercial areas, shared streets contribute to the public space network, adding vibrancy and activity with outdoor dining, public seating, artwork, and landscaping. Local developments have incorporated private shared streets in recent years, including the DC Wharf, 901W in Shaw, and at Eckington Yards.



*Seating can double as playful elements like these pebble benches at the DC Wharf. Source: perkinseastman.com.*



*Lined with active retail, District Square is part of a curbsless shared street network at the DC Wharf that accommodates people walking and biking, trucks unloading, cars picking up and dropping off passengers, and outdoor dining. Source: perkinseastman.com.*

# Friendship Heights

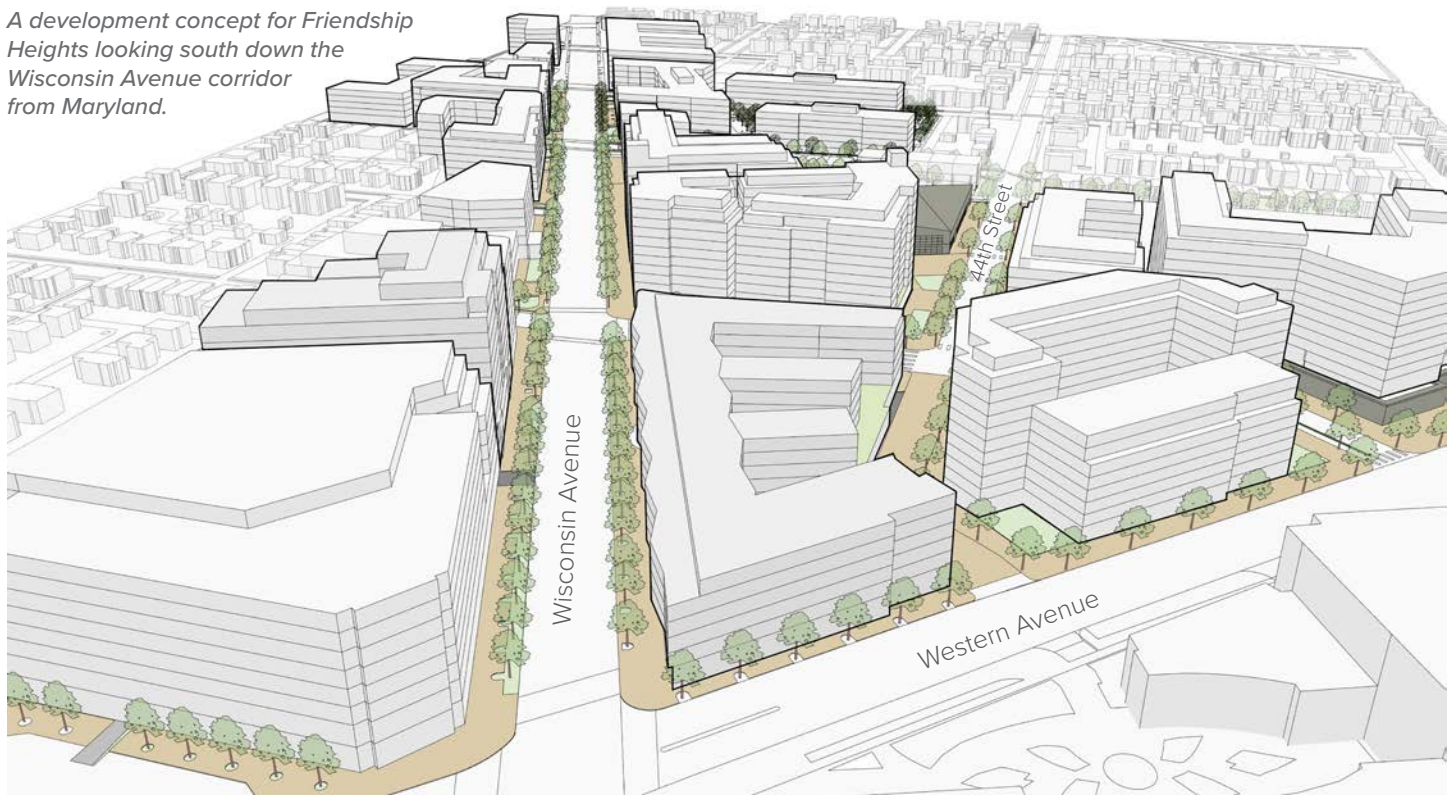
Friendship Heights will transition into a modern neighborhood center, enhancing walkability by breaking down the large blocks around Jenifer and 44th Streets with through-block pedestrian-priority connections activated with diverse ground floor uses and a plaza for community gathering. Neighborhood identity and a renewed public life will be created through welcoming public open spaces framed by retail, restaurants, residences, and other active ground floor uses.

Contributing to Friendship Heights' identity will be the relocated Western Bus Garage on the former Lord and Taylor site, which will continue to serve as a piece of prominent civic infrastructure. Adaptive reuse of the existing garage on 44th Street can become a key neighborhood amenity if feasible in a redevelopment.

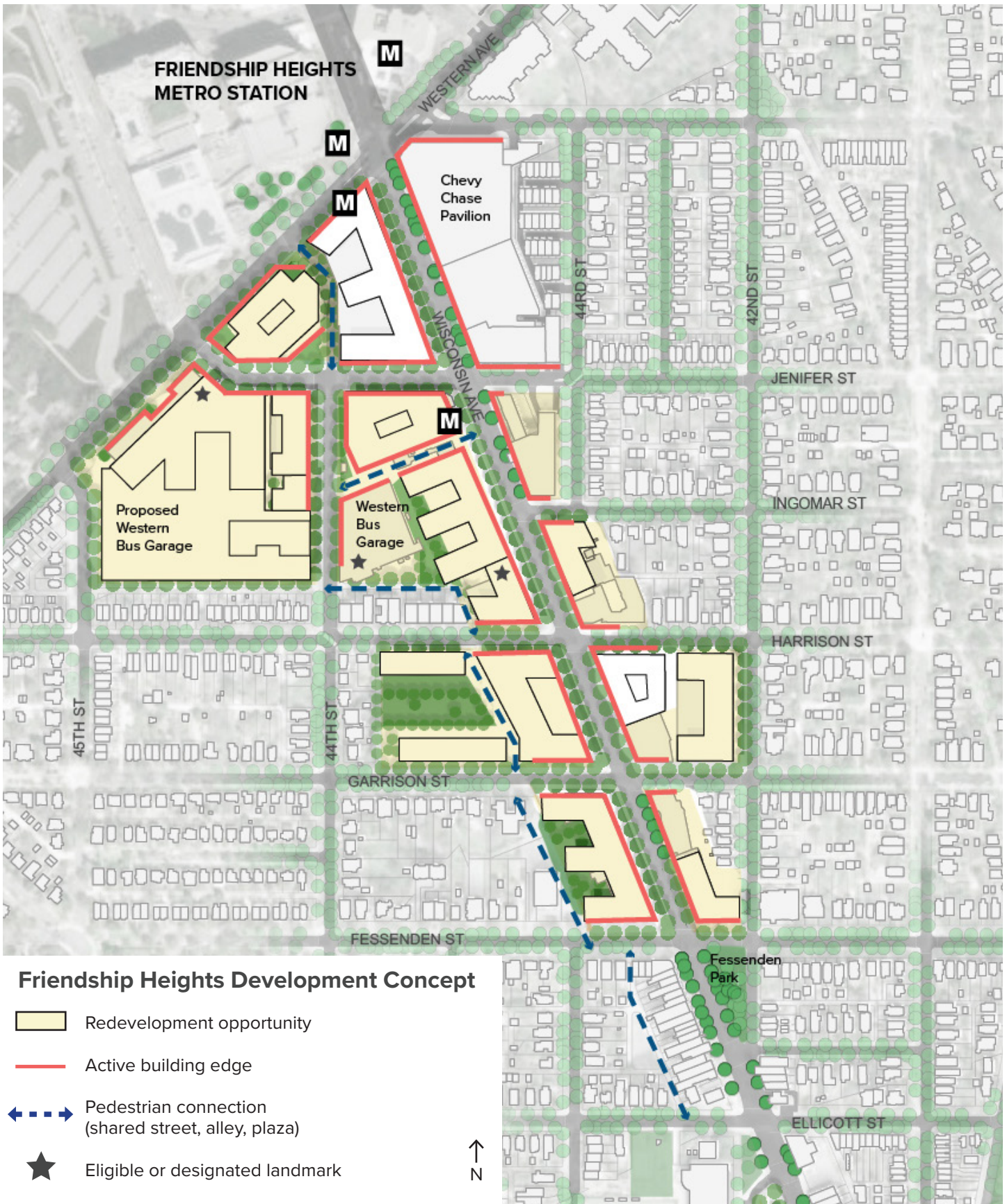
## Recommendations

- Establish 44th Street and Jenifer Street as secondary retail streets supporting Wisconsin Avenue.
- Activate vacant and transitioning spaces in Friendship Heights.
- Allow for flexibility in activating ground floor uses in Friendship Heights, designed to be street-facing with transparent façades.
- Improve safety and comfort of walking across Wisconsin Avenue to support retail on both sides of the street.
- Break down Friendship Heights' larger blocks with pedestrian connections.
- Design and program open spaces to support social gathering.

*A development concept for Friendship Heights looking south down the Wisconsin Avenue corridor from Maryland.*







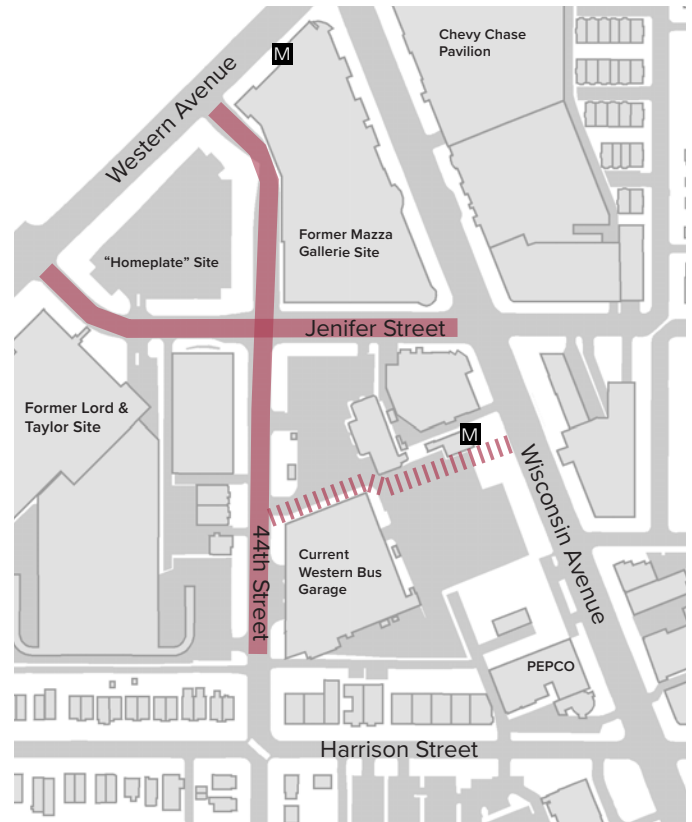
## A MODERN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Friendship Heights is the area of greatest opportunity along the corridor for new housing (including affordable housing), revitalized retail, new cultural spaces, and permanent arts and entertainment venues. To compete with nearby Bethesda's larger retail presence, Friendship Heights will need to identify and pursue opportunities for creating a convenience-oriented tenant mix that appeals to surrounding residents and workers.

Transformative development in Friendship Heights will occur over several years on a project-by-project basis which can create challenges for current and prospective retailers. Coordinated redevelopment planning and retail activation strategies can support a sustained and vibrant neighborhood center through this transition.

### Establish 44th Street and Jenifer Street as secondary retail streets supporting Wisconsin Avenue.

- Develop 44th Street as a secondary retail street with retail on both sides, from the alley north of Harrison Street up to Western Avenue. For the public segment of 44th Street from the alley to Jenifer Street, include wide sidewalks for outdoor dining and street activation. Coordinate the design of the proposed bus garage, where applicable on this block, to address operational and safety conflicts with transit vehicles. For the private segment of 44th Street from Jenifer to Western Avenue, brick-and-mortar retail may not be feasible. The private ownership allows for public space design flexibility and program (e.g., a shared street or plaza) to facilitate mobile vending food trucks and farmers markets.
- Develop Jenifer Street as a secondary retail street with retail on both sides where feasible. Include wide sidewalks for outdoor dining and street activation with bicycle parking amenities to complement protected bike lanes.



Conceptual rendering looking north up 44th Street from Jenifer Street envisions this intersection transformed into a public space framed by new development.



## Activate vacant and transitioning spaces in Friendship Heights.

- Promote the adaptive reuse of the existing WMATA Garage on 44th Street as an anchor retail opportunity such as a food hall, experiential grocer (potentially a relocated/expanded Rodman's), or entertainment venue such as a bar or arcade.
- Incorporate a mid-block pedestrian connection on the 5200-block (west side) of Wisconsin Avenue to allow flexibility for storefronts, live/work spaces, or residential frontages that activate the space, as well as retail. Encourage a maximum frontage width of 25 feet.



*Adaptive reuse of the Evergreen Brickworks in Toronto.*

## Allow for flexibility in activating ground floor uses in Friendship Heights, designed to be street-facing with transparent façades.

- Require retail entrances face Wisconsin Avenue between Western Avenue and Jenifer Street. South of Jenifer Street to Fessenden Street; allow flexibility for storefronts, live/work residential, and office, among other active ground floor uses.
- All residential and commercial ground floor uses should have a minimum of 50% transparency.
- Allow double-height retail signage for retailers fronting Wisconsin Avenue between Jenifer Street and Western Avenue.



*Conceptual rendering looking south from 44th and Jennifer Streets, shows a plaza framed by new development and a repurposed WMATA bus garage.*



*Urban formats of traditionally larger stores like Ikea are providing retail diversification in places like Paris (pictured) and Toronto. Source: blogto.com*



## PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES IN FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

Friendship Heights should transition into a modern neighborhood center composed of walkable blocks, dynamic open spaces, and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape along Wisconsin Avenue and adjoining streets to encourage business patronage and support a thriving public life.

Open spaces integrated with development can provide opportunities for public recreation, social gathering, and connection to nature, identified as a priority for Friendship Heights in Ready2Play, the District's 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### Improve safety and comfort of walking across Wisconsin Avenue to support retail on both sides of the street.

- Design intersections to be visually unobstructed with longer crossing intervals and high-visibility crosswalks.

### Break down Friendship Heights' larger blocks with pedestrian connections.

- Create an east-west pedestrian plaza across the 5200-block of Wisconsin Avenue (west side) that connects the Metro Station elevator entrance on Wisconsin Avenue with 44th Street. Design this open space as a 'retail room' with seating, and landscape features.
- Make the private portion of 44th Street between Western Avenue and Jenifer Street a shared street or public plaza that can be programmed for activities while prioritizing pedestrians, bicycles, and socializing.



*The Brookland Arts Walk provides a pedestrian connection framed by artists' studios that can be programmed for pop-up markets and community gatherings in all seasons.*



*A mid-block pedestrian through-way creates a 'retail room' in Bethesda, Maryland. Source: visitmontgomery.com*



*The private shared street in Eckington Yards includes residential and commercial entrances, a loading area, and a small plaza framed by retail. Source: eca-pc.com*



## Design and program open spaces to support social gathering.

- Consider sun orientation and prevailing winds to improve pedestrian comfort and encourage use and activation of public open spaces.
- Program open spaces with year-round and seasonal activities such as farmers markets, playful features, food festivals, and other cultural and performing arts events.
- Design the public realm of 44th Street and Jenifer Street to support multimodal travel, including a bike lane, bus circulation, and wide sidewalks for walking and outdoor dining.
- Explore using the large flat roof area of the proposed Western Bus Garage as publicly accessible open green space.
- Incorporate family-oriented play features wherever feasible, including the landscaped setback on 45th Street along the west wall of the proposed bus garage and the redevelopment opportunity on the west side of the 5100-block of Wisconsin Avenue.



*AlexRenew includes a county-run recreational field on the roof of a large wastewater treatment center in Alexandria, VA. Source: Landdesign.com*



*Adult work out equipment, trees, and landscaping wrap a transformer station at Julius Deutsch Park in Toronto.*



*The Friendship Heights Alliance has organized regular events along Wisconsin Avenue since forming in 2022. Source: Albert Ting for Friendship Heights Alliance.*

## A WESTERN BUS GARAGE FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

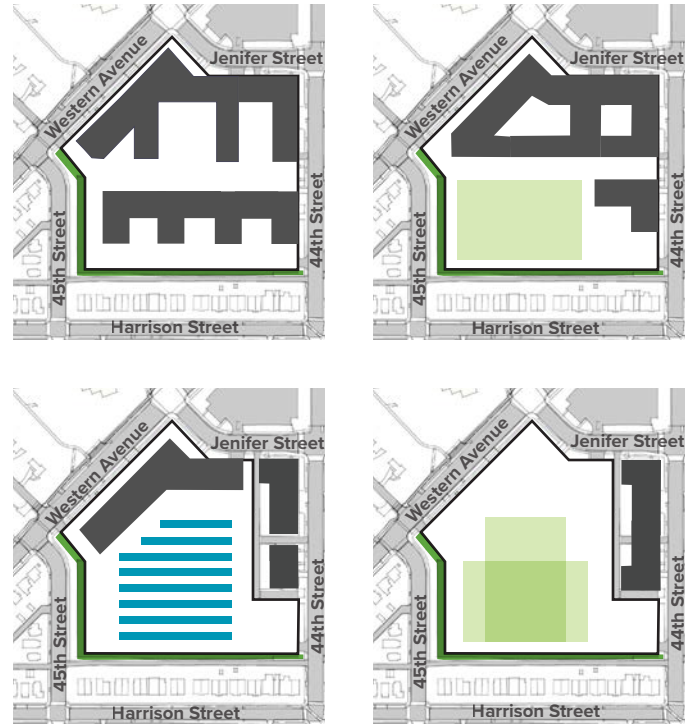
WMATA plans to build a new zero-emission electric bus garage on the former Lord & Taylor site in Friendship Heights. The transit facility is critical to sustaining bus operations and capacity on Wisconsin Avenue and other routes in northwest DC and will occupy a large portion of the site. Some preservation of the existing department store façade is possible if the HPRB approves the landmark nomination. The garage is likely to be one-story at 44th Street and two stories at 45th Street to account for the sloping terrain.

The Comp Plan recommends a mix of residential and commercial uses to complement the local public facilities use (bus garage). WMATA is exploring the potential for mixed-use development above and adjacent to the proposed bus garage, subject to structural engineering considerations, market feasibility, and a willing development partner. Neighboring properties on 44th and Jenifer Streets could partner with WMATA to expand the development potential of the block.

Development above the proposed bus garage should step down toward moderate- and low- density residential zones along Harrison and 45th Streets. This Development Framework recommends community-serving uses on the garage site to support the residential growth in Friendship Heights, including passive or active recreational areas with seating, lighting, and gardens or vegetation that are publicly accessible.

If there is no development above the proposed bus garage, its roof could be designed as a green area with community-serving uses and incorporate solar panels to generate energy for the facility. Elements could include terraced stairs with seating, vegetation, water, lighting, and public art.

While the façades of the garage along 44th and Jenifer Streets should be lined with active uses, the façade along the south (facing the alley) and 45th Street should be designed to reduce its visual impact on neighboring residences. The garage should include vegetative screening, such as hanging or climbing vines, trees, shrubs, and flowers. Further study and coordination are required to determine the points of access, loading, and servicing for the proposed bus garage and private uses to ensure safety and address operational needs.



Four conceptual site plan scenarios for the block with the proposed Western Bus garage with residential development, a full-sized recreational field, and solar panels on the garage roof. These scenarios could involve a joint development partnership with neighboring properties on 44th and Jenifer Streets.



The Kathleen Andrews Bus Garage in Edmonton, named for the city's first female bus driver, has an award-winning design that celebrates the services and function of this important civic facility. Source: gh3.ca





A living green wall could be employed on the southern and 45th Street façades of the proposed garage, like this one in Warwick, UK. Source: [archello.com](http://archello.com).



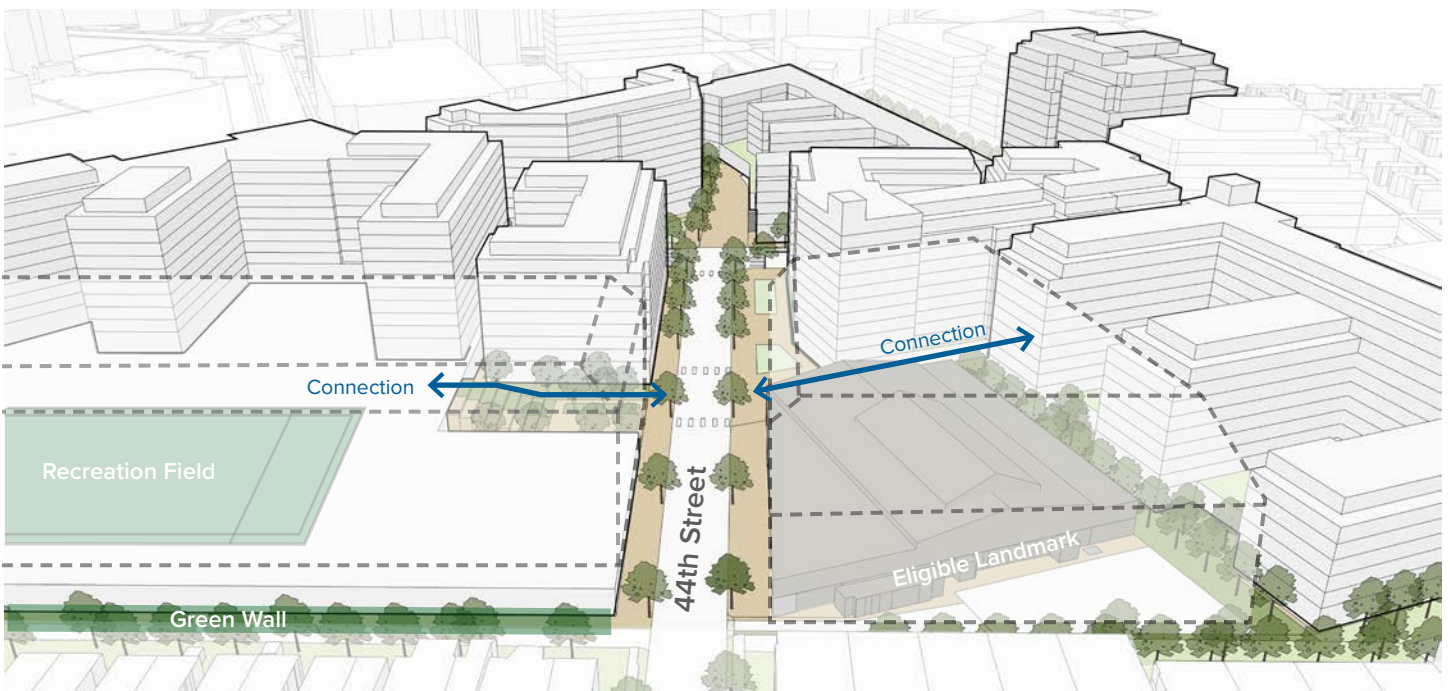
Development above the proposed bus garage should step down toward residential uses along Harrison and 45th Streets, like this adaptive reuse on the Waterworks building in Toronto.



Open spaces on the proposed bus garage could include pathways, seating areas, play structures, vegetation, and gardens, like at Terrapin Row in College Park, MD. Source: [parkerrodriguez.com](http://parkerrodriguez.com).



If feasible, a connection to the top of the proposed bus garage should be a welcoming and activated space, like the steps at Ballston Quarter in Arlington, VA. Source: [mkskstudios.com](http://mkskstudios.com).



A development concept for blocks in Friendship Heights looking north up 44th Street, showing connections across large sites and potential to build above the current and proposed bus garage.



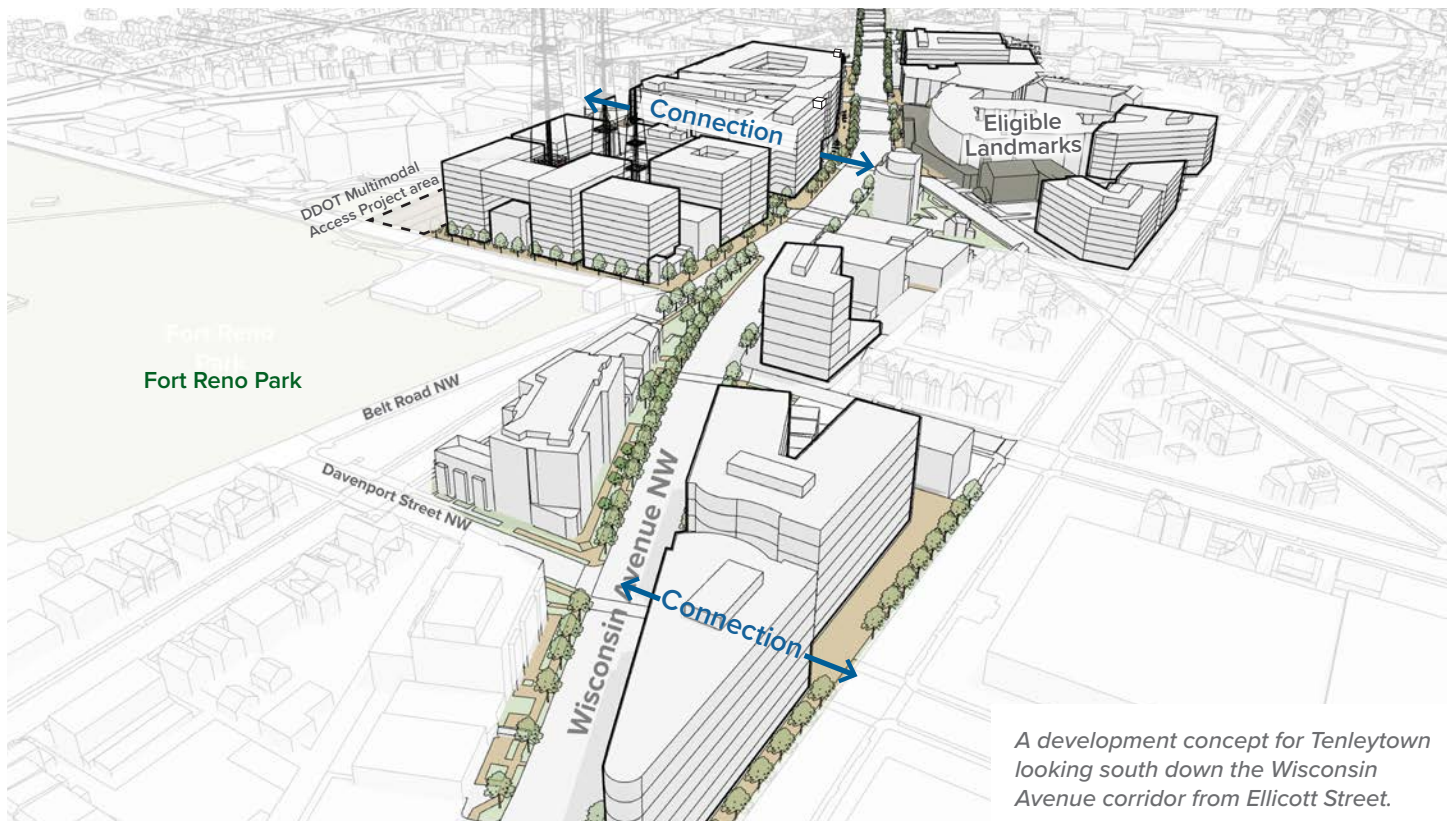
# Tenleytown

Tenleytown will be strengthened as the corridor's civic commons, enhancing walkability by breaking down the large 4500-block on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue with through-block pedestrian-priority connections activated with diverse ground floor uses. New buildings will be positioned to enhance visibility of built and natural landmarks, elevating Tenleytown's sense of place and legibility for the thousands of students, families, shoppers, and workers that pass through this node daily.

A cohesive public realm for people of all ages will be established from the green spaces around Tenley Circle, north to Fort Reno Park, leveraging planned improvements to the bus turnaround at 40th Street/Fort Drive and adjacent redevelopments on the blocks between Albemarle and Chesapeake Streets.

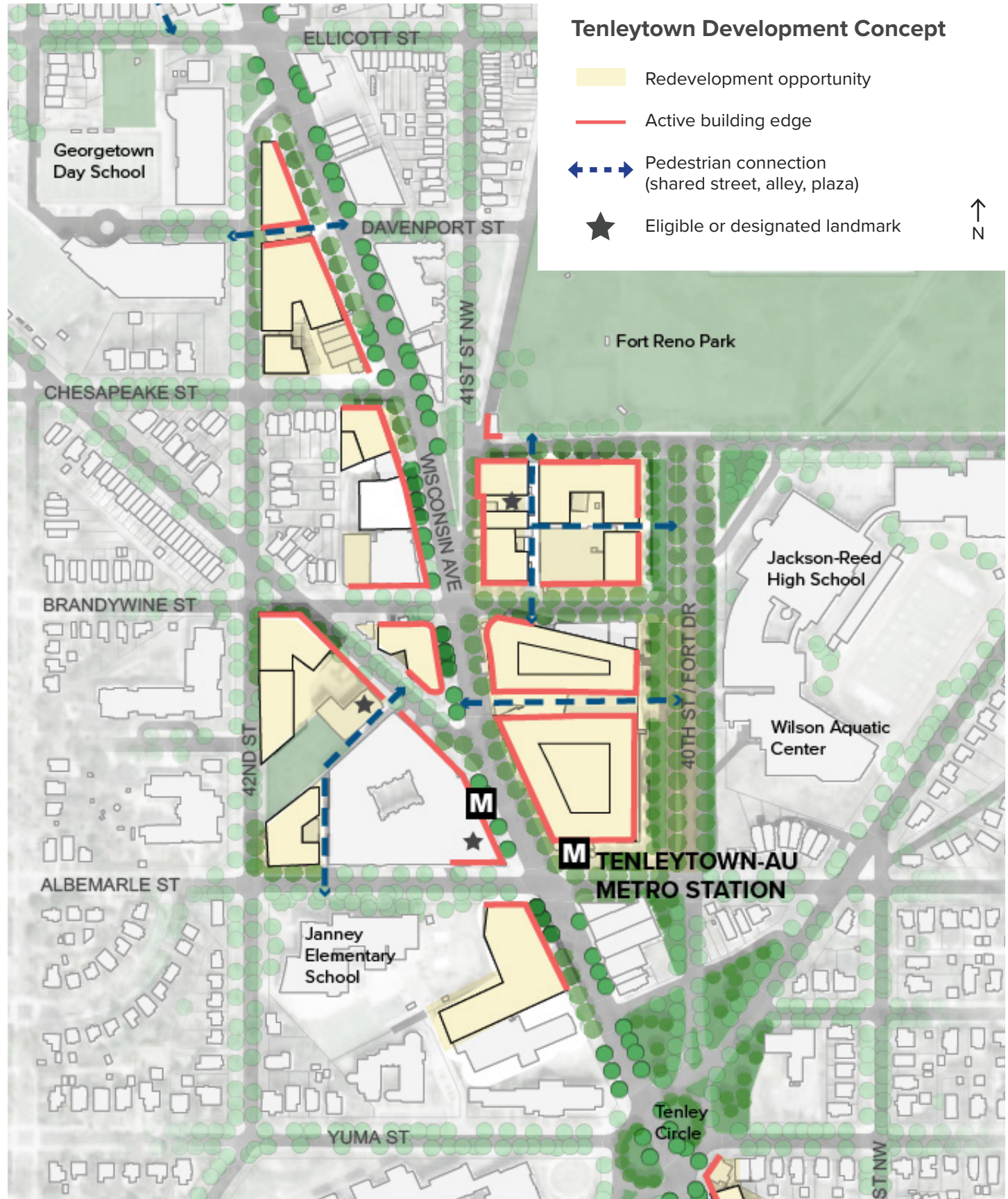
## Recommendations

- Activate public spaces in Tenleytown's urban blocks in advance of future redevelopment.
- Concentrate a diversity of sidewalk-activating retailers on the east side of the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue.
- Allow for flexibility in activating ground floor uses in Tenleytown, designed to be street-facing with transparent façades.
- Break down Tenleytown's larger blocks with east-west pedestrian connections.
- Coordinate public and private investment at the Tenleytown-AU Metro Station block to enhance the area's role as a civic and commercial center.
- Improve Fessenden Park and the alley network behind the west side of the 4900-block of Wisconsin Avenue.
- Incorporate the NPS-owned green spaces around Tenley Circle into a connected public realm coordinated with future improvements to 40th Street/Fort Drive.



*A development concept for Tenleytown looking south down the Wisconsin Avenue corridor from Ellicott Street.*





## WISCONSIN AVENUE'S CIVIC COMMONS

Tenleytown accommodates over 30,000 people moving through the area daily for work, school, shopping, recreation, and socializing. Within a quarter-mile of the Tenleytown Metro Station, the cluster of public and private schools, the Tenley-Friendship Library, Fort Reno Park, Wilson Aquatic Center, and diversity of retail and services has created a hub for students and families throughout the day. With additional residential density expected, Tenleytown can foster an identity around its cluster of civic and educational facilities to drive placemaking and attract commercial activity.

To address the range of preferences of the diverse customer base of students, families, and other groups, small and micro-sized retailers should be prioritized in Tenleytown. These spaces can be occupied by a mix of food and beverage tenants, alongside emerging direct-to-consumer brands (e.g. Casper, Bonobos) not presently located in Georgetown or Bethesda.

### Activate public spaces in Tenleytown's urban blocks in advance of future redevelopment.

- Introduce a weekly farmers market in Tenleytown to provide smaller format retail opportunities in the near term.
- Improve the well-used alleys on the east side of the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue with pedestrian amenities such as lighting and colorful paint on the ground and walls.
- Explore pedestrian improvements at key intersections of Wisconsin Avenue through the application of DDOT's Arts in the Right-of-Way (AROW) program.
- Activate underused green spaces and parks with cultural and educational activities.



*An AROW program installation at a crosswalk on 17th Street.*



*The farmers market in Columbia Heights occurs every Saturday morning in the Civic Plaza.*



**Concentrate a diversity of sidewalk-activating retailers on the east side of the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue.**

- Prioritize food and beverage tenants with ample café seating framing a mid-block pedestrian connection through the east side of the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue in future redevelopment. Restaurant frontage should not exceed 40 feet and other uses 25 feet.
- Encourage retail frontage in the public and private alley and along 40th Street to activate all pedestrian-facing façades, if the east side of the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue does not substantially redevelop.
- Provide opportunities for retail kiosks adjacent to the Metro station plaza on Albemarle Street.

**Allow for flexibility in activating ground floor uses in Tenleytown, designed to be street-facing with transparent façades.**

- Require retail entrances face Wisconsin Avenue between Albemarle Street and Brandywine Street.
- Allow flexibility for storefronts, live/work residential, and office, among other active ground floor uses between Brandywine Street and Ellicott Street, Grant Road and Albemarle Street, and Rodman Street and Windom Place; all ground floor uses should have 50% minimum transparency.
- Discourage retail on Wisconsin Avenue between Windom Place and Grant Road, around Tenley Circle.



*The 109OZ in Toronto features storefronts with ample windows and clearly demarcated entrances, providing a legible and active streetscape. Source: hullmark.ca.*



*The Wren on Florida Avenue is a prominent apartment building with a grocery store at ground level. Source: hcm2.com.*



*In DC, private alleys or pedestrian connections can be activated with painted surfaces and overhead lights. Source: Greater Wichita Partnership.*

## PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES IN TENLEYTOWN

Tenleytown's role as a thriving commercial node and the corridor's civic commons should be strengthened by new and improved public spaces thoughtfully integrated with redevelopment. Flanking Wisconsin Avenue, urbanized blocks will benefit from a network of open spaces, plazas, and multimodal streets and alleys for circulation and enhanced public life. Public spaces should be planned to serve Tenleytown's large student-aged population, as places for outdoor recreation and socializing. The linear space of 40th Street/Fort Drive is a key opportunity for civic placemaking, connecting Fort Reno Park with Tenley Circle.

### Break down Tenleytown's larger blocks with east-west pedestrian connections.

- Establish an east-west connection across the 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue (east side) through future redevelopment as a shared street that prioritizes pedestrians. This requires consolidation of existing driveways/curb cuts and likely closure of the existing public alley on the block. The ground floor along the mid-block connection should be active and transparent.
- Establish an east-west pedestrian connection through future redevelopment of the triangular property bounded by Wisconsin Avenue and 42nd Street, approximately aligned with Davenport Street.

### Coordinate public and private investment at the Tenleytown-AU Metro Station block to enhance the area's role as a civic and commercial center.

- Improve the pedestrian experience at the Tenleytown-AU Metro Station, prioritizing pedestrian circulation while establishing the area as a gateway for visitors. Fixed seating and movable furniture can activate the plaza and provide a more dignified experience for transit users.
- Coordinate improvements to 40th Street/Fort Drive with the abutting NPS parkland and public rights-of-way as a central transit and civic plaza framed by the high school and aquatic center on the east, future high-density redevelopment on the west, Tenley Circle to the south and Fort Reno Park on the north. Consider the area holistically with improvements such as shade trees, ground cover planting, seating, lighting, and recreational features (especially for the large school-aged population) including play amenities, features that invite skateboarding, exercise equipment, and a spray park.



Musicians perform in the small Tenleytown Metro plaza at Albemarle Street which could be expanded and improved with amenities through redevelopment.



The plaza at CityCenter DC includes a playable water feature. Source: fosterandpartners.com.

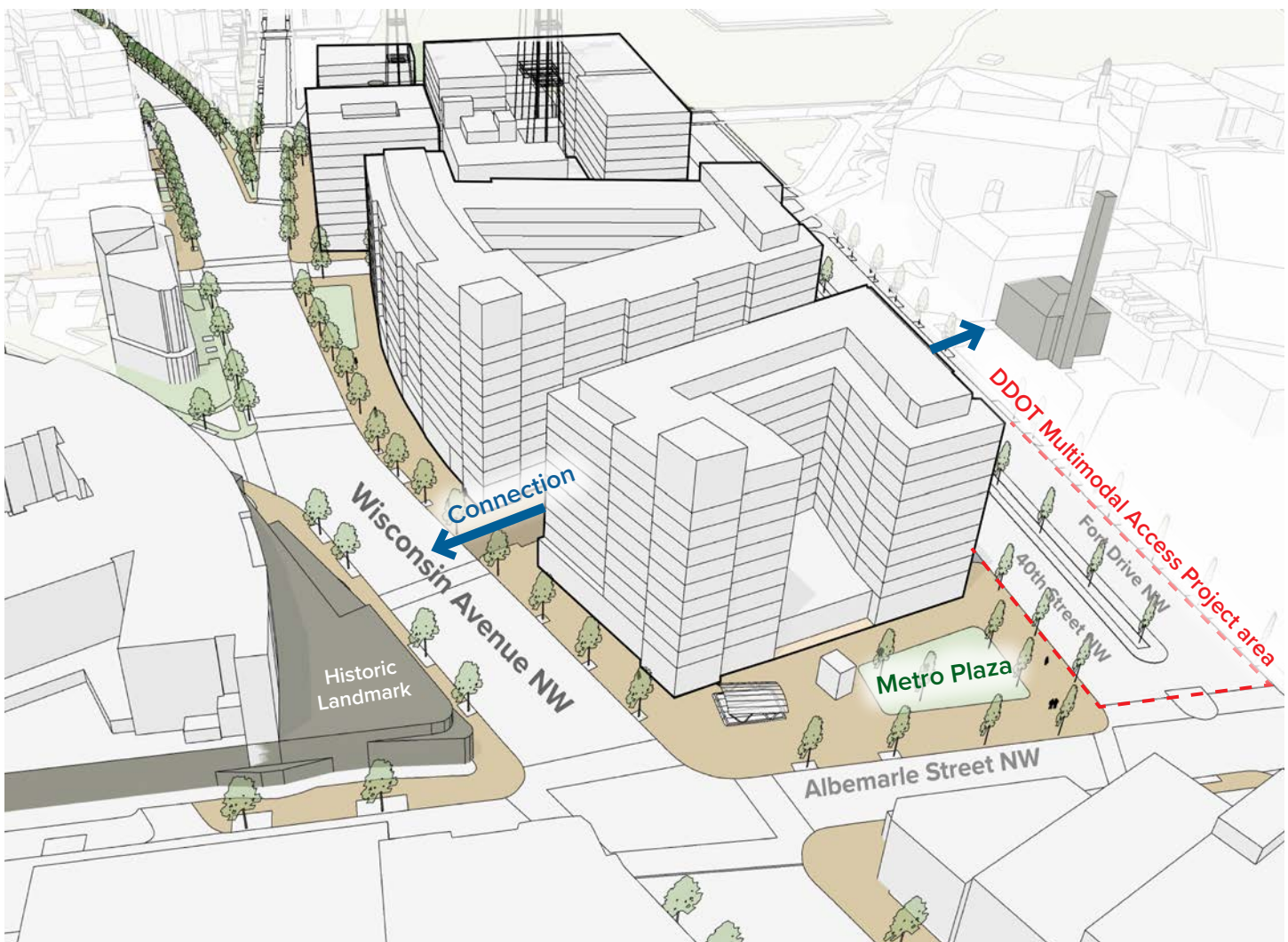




Conceptual rendering looking east toward the aquatic center and school, along a new connection breaking down the the large 4500-block of Wisconsin Avenue.



The Brookland Arts Walk connects educational anchors and Metro station with an active pedestrian promenade. -Source: tortigallas.com



A development concept for blocks around the Tenleytown-AU Metro looking north up Wisconsin Avenue shows an east-west connection through the block, an expanded plaza at the Metro station and the DDOT Multimodal Access Project area on 40th Street / Fort Drive.

## Improve Fessenden Park and the alley network behind the west side of the 4900-block of Wisconsin Avenue.

Fessenden Park is an important neighborhood asset activated with movable seating and recurring neighborhood programming. The park can continue to be improved in the following ways:

- Preserve existing large healthy trees and add understory trees and other plantings to provide seasonal interest.
- Retain and/or define flexible lawn areas that can be used for events and as a location for movable tables and chairs.
- Add walkways to structure circulation through the park and bicycle parking on 42nd Street.
- Add an iconic public art feature as a playable and/or culturally important element.

### Alley Activation Opportunity



Commercial uses on deep narrow lots along the west side of Wisconsin Avenue’s 4900 block offer an opportunity to activate the rear alley network and triangular parking lot with engaging alley-facing uses scaled to the lower density neighborhood. Temporary or permanent activation strategies could include public art, shade structures over café seating areas, and landscaping. Signage can direct people to explore these alleys and discover hidden gems.



Columbia Heights Green converted an alley lot into a multi-purpose community space. Source: [washingtonparks.net](http://washingtonparks.net)



ANXO in Brightwood activates a side and rear alley with public art and an intimate neighborhood bar.



**Incorporate the NPS-owned green spaces around Tenley Circle into a connected public realm coordinated with future improvements to 40th Street/Fort Drive.**

Future improvements should be programmed and designed cohesively, in the following ways:

- Enhance the open spaces' landscape by adding sidewalks, shade trees, understory trees, shrubs, and ground cover plantings.
- Retain open lawns to allow for flexible programming opportunities such as outdoor festivals, concerts, farmers markets, and other community-centered events.
- Relate improvements to the current and future pedestrian circulation routes of the intersecting streets, incorporating traffic calming where feasible.



*Disparate open spaces around Eastern Market Metro Station were collectively improved with lawns, walkways, trees, seating, and play structures. Source: moya.us.*

*A concept for an improved public realm connecting Tenley Circle green spaces with a new Tenleytown-AU Metro station plaza and 40th Street/Fort Drive bus turnaround.*

# South of Tenley Circle

South of Tenley Circle will be better integrated into the corridor, enhancing walkability by improving crosswalks and reducing curb cuts along Wisconsin Avenue between Yuma and Rodman Streets to better connect the Tenleytown-AU Metro Station with the developments, businesses, and open spaces to the south. New developments will frame a more cohesive and pedestrian-friendly streetscape along this segment of the corridor, as well as public spaces at Veazey Triangle and the entrance to Glover Archbold Park at Van Ness Street.

Complementing the Great Lawn of City Ridge, Veazey Triangle Park can be transformed into an inviting place on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue for both passive enjoyment and active public gathering for neighbors of all ages.

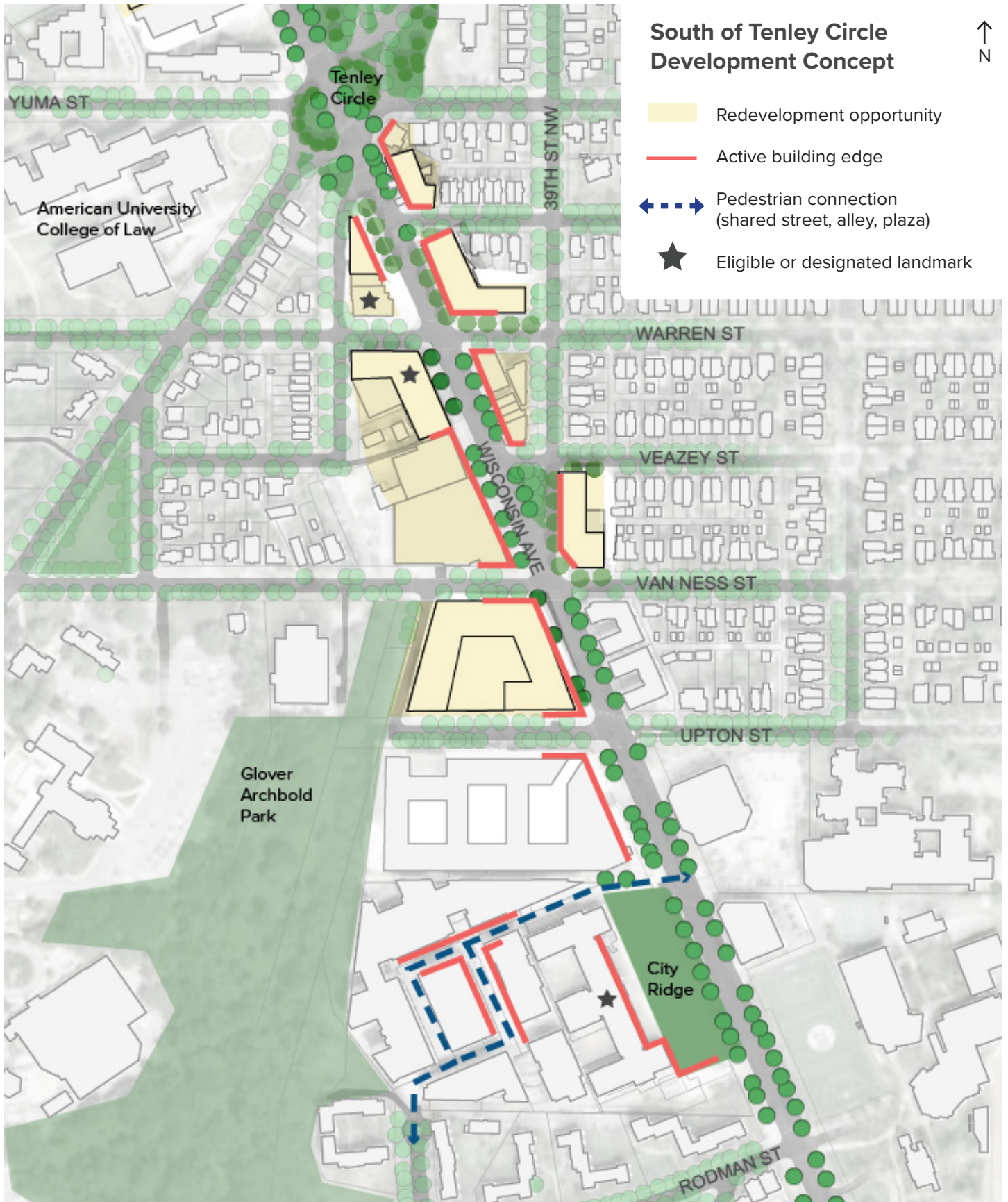
## Recommendations

- Improve the pedestrian experience between City Ridge and the Tenleytown-AU Metro Station.
- Transform Veazey Triangle Park into an inviting place for both passive enjoyment and active public gathering for neighbors of all ages.



A development concept south of Tenley Circle looking north up Wisconsin Avenue from Van Ness Street.





## PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES SOUTH OF TENLEY CRICLE

South of Tenley Circle, the Great Lawn at City Ridge provides a programmed open green space for the neighborhood. Existing public spaces such as Veazey Triangle Park can be improved to support additional activity along the corridor. The pedestrian connection between Tenleytown and City Ridge can be improved with new streetscapes associated with redevelopment and safety enhancements at intersections.

### Improve the pedestrian experience between City Ridge and the Tenleytown-AU Metro Station.

- Improve walkability from Tenley Circle south to Upton Street with crosswalk safety improvements and enhanced sidewalks that reduce the number of curb cuts and shorten intersection crossings.
- Activate private surface parking lots with outdoor seating and programmed events.
- Activate public alleys with redevelopment that prioritizes the pedestrian experience.



*As part of the Georgetown Day School expansion, the segment of 42nd Street was closed to create a small pocket park with a safer intersection at Wisconsin Avenue and Ellicott Street.*



*Underutilized surface lots can be used to activate the corridor with small temporary and mobile vendors, like at 4800 Wisconsin Avenue. Source: popville.com.*



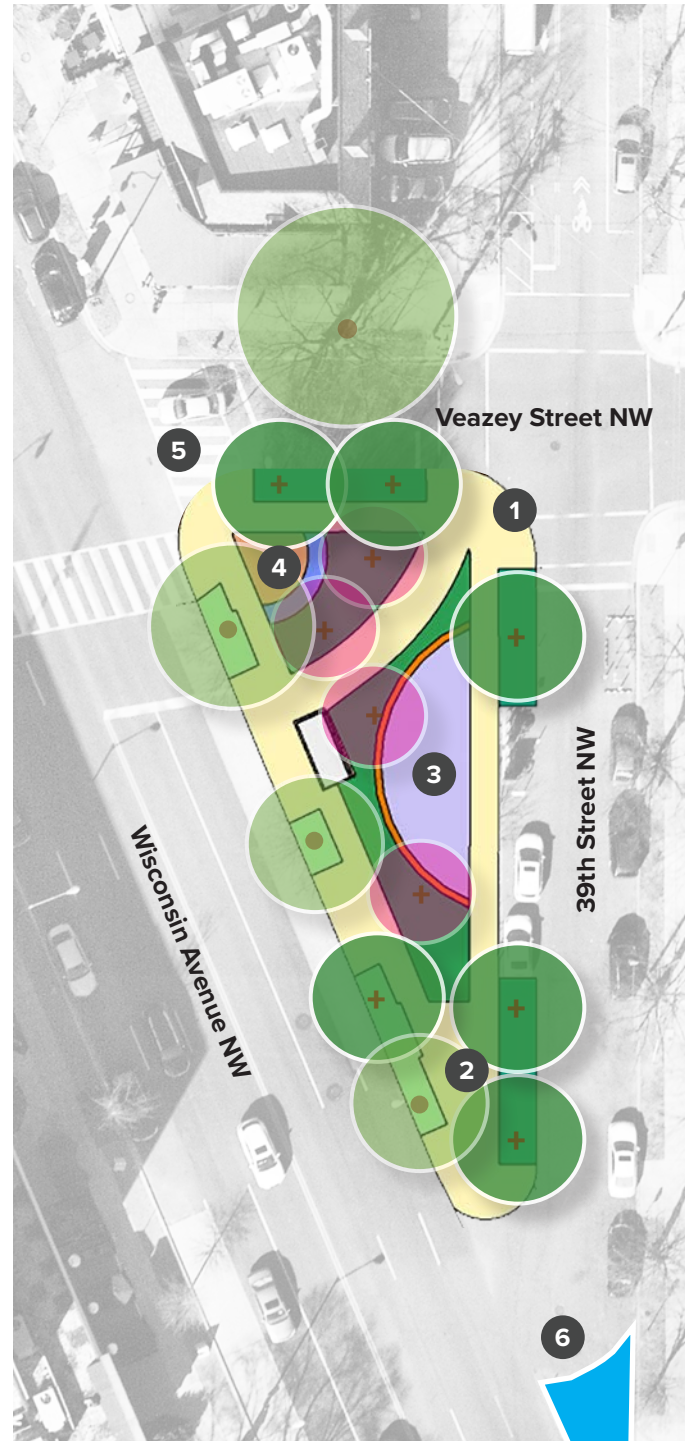
*Entrances activate the alley between W and V streets on the rear of Collection 14 with access to retail, leasable office space, and event space. Source: perkinseastman.com.*



**Transform Veazey Triangle Park into an inviting place for both passive enjoyment and active public gathering for neighbors of all ages.**

Potential improvements include (numbers correspond to diagram at right):

1. Curb extensions where feasible along Veazey Street and 39th Street to enlarge the space, calm turning traffic, provide a place for green infrastructure, and increase the tree canopy.
2. Amenities such as walkways, shade and ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers.
3. Movable chairs and tables and a play area for children and families.
4. A site for hosting a ceremonial space of national importance, as identified in the District’s strategy for locating commemorative works.
5. Explore closing or narrowing either Veazey Street or 39th Street adjacent to the triangle park.
6. Colorful pavement markings on Veazey Street or 39th Street through the application of DDOT’s Arts in the Right-of-Way (AROW) program.



*A concept for Veazey Triangle Park envisions opportunities for new plantings, amenities for seating and play, and a location for a commemorative work.*



*The Petworth Meditation Garden, a small triangle park at 13th Street and Kansas Avenue, supports both programmed activities and organic social gatherings.*

# Zoning Strategy

Zoning will be an important tool to implement the height, density, and use mix guidance of the Comp Plan, as well as the more detailed land use and design guidance of this Development Framework. Four zoning categories are recommended for properties within the Wisconsin Avenue corridor study area, consistent with Comp Plan land use designations and policies:

- Friendship Heights Metro Zone
- Friendship Heights Transition Zone
- Tenleytown Metro Zone
- Mixed-Use Corridor Zone

When built to these new zoning standards, a significant amount of housing, including dedicated affordable housing, will be added along the entire corridor, achieving Comp Plan goals of more equitable development in Rock Creek West. Rezoning is not recommended for properties governed by active PUDs.

Within these four new zoning categories, the percent set-aside for IZ will be based on the IZ+ calculations outlined in 11 DCMR 1003.3 and 1003.4, which require between 8.5% and 20% affordable housing per eligible development, based on construction type and density of proposed development. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for each zoning category accounts for IZ+. The heights for each zoning category are not inclusive of rooftop penthouses and are subject to conformance with the federal Height of Buildings Act of 1910.

To achieve the urban design vision of this Development Framework, OP will work with property owners and developers whenever possible. It is recommended that Design Review, as currently described in the zoning regulations, be applied to the high-density mixed-use areas covered by the proposed Friendship Heights Metro Zone and Tenleytown Metro Zone. The purpose of Design Review is to promote high-quality, contextual design, by allowing for review against specified criteria as identified in this Development Framework. The process entails a public hearing with review and approval by the Zoning Commission. The proposed Mixed-Use Corridor Zone and Friendship Heights Transition Zone could be developed as a matter of right. A PUD would also be an available option in all four zones.

## Friendship Heights Metro Zone

This high-density mixed-use zone enables redevelopment of larger blocks at the Friendship Heights Metro station while accommodating the proposed Western Bus Garage relocation. Development integrates public open spaces and retail for placemaking.

**FAR (IZ+):** 7.8  
**Height:** 130 feet plus penthouse

## Friendship Heights Transition Zone

This moderate-density zone enables residential redevelopment on blocks between Garrison and Harrison Streets as well as on the west side of the proposed Western Bus Garage providing a transition to lower-scale neighborhoods.

**FAR (IZ+):** 2.16  
**Height:** 50 feet plus penthouse

## Tenleytown Metro Zone

This high-density mixed-use zone enables redevelopment of larger blocks at the Tenleytown/AU Metro station. Development integrates public open spaces and retail for placemaking.

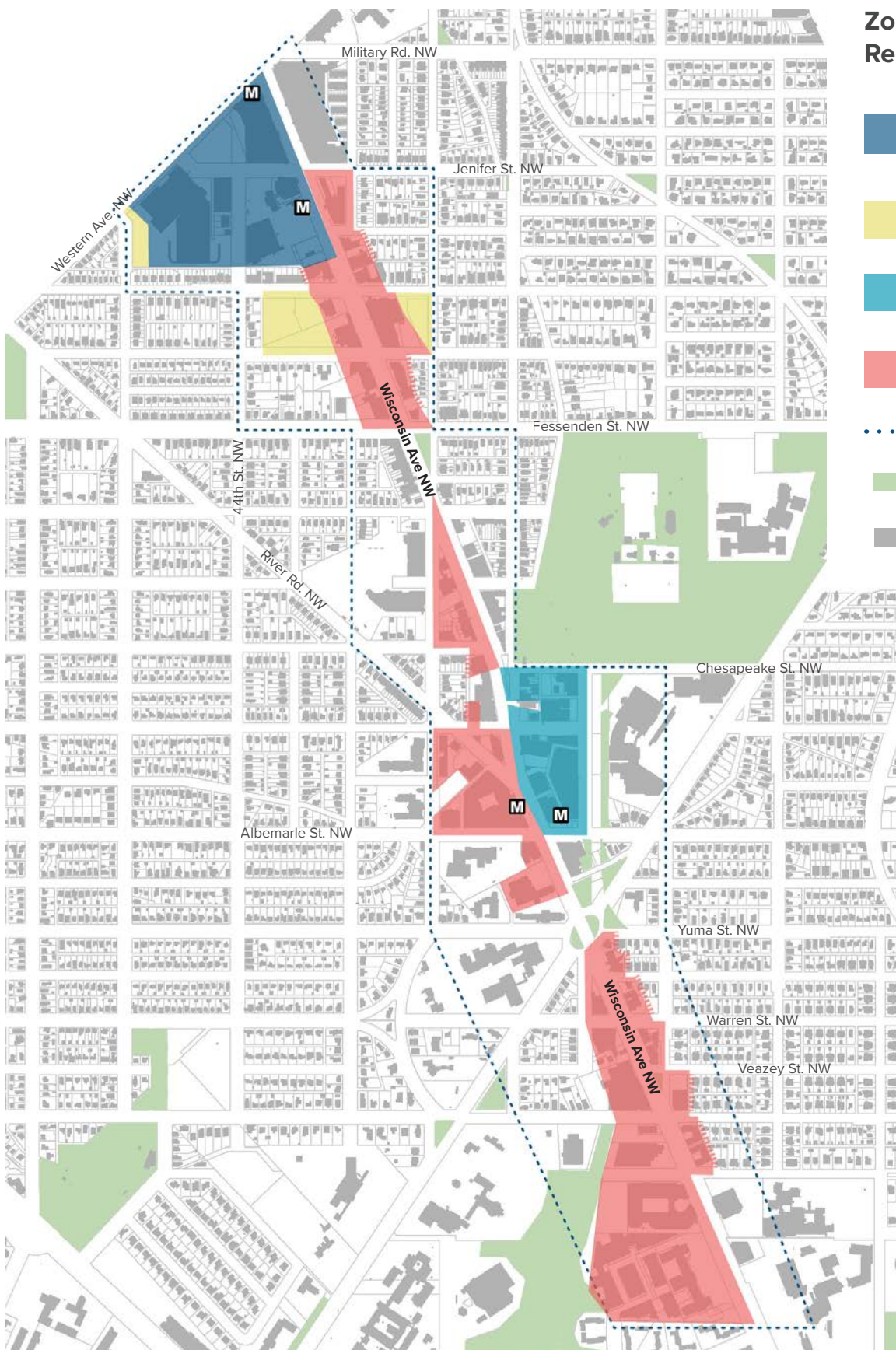
**FAR (IZ+):** 7.2  
**Height:** 110 feet plus penthouse

## Mixed-Use Corridor Zone

This medium-density mixed-use zone enables infill redevelopment along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, with small open spaces such as plazas or pocket parks, and neighborhood-serving retail/cafes.

**FAR (IZ+):** 5.4  
**Height:** 75 feet plus penthouse





## Zoning Recommendations

- Friendship Heights Metro Zone (High-Density)
- Friendship Heights Transition Zone (Moderate-Density)
- Tenleytown Metro Zone (High-Density)
- Mixed-Use Corridor Zone (Medium-Density)
- Study Area
- Parks (District and Federal)
- Building Footprints

# FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS METRO ZONE

**Building Height:** 130 feet plus penthouse

**FAR:** 7.8 Residential (IZ+)  
6.0 Non-residential

**Lot Occupancy:** 80% (except for proposed bus garage)

## Massing Guidelines

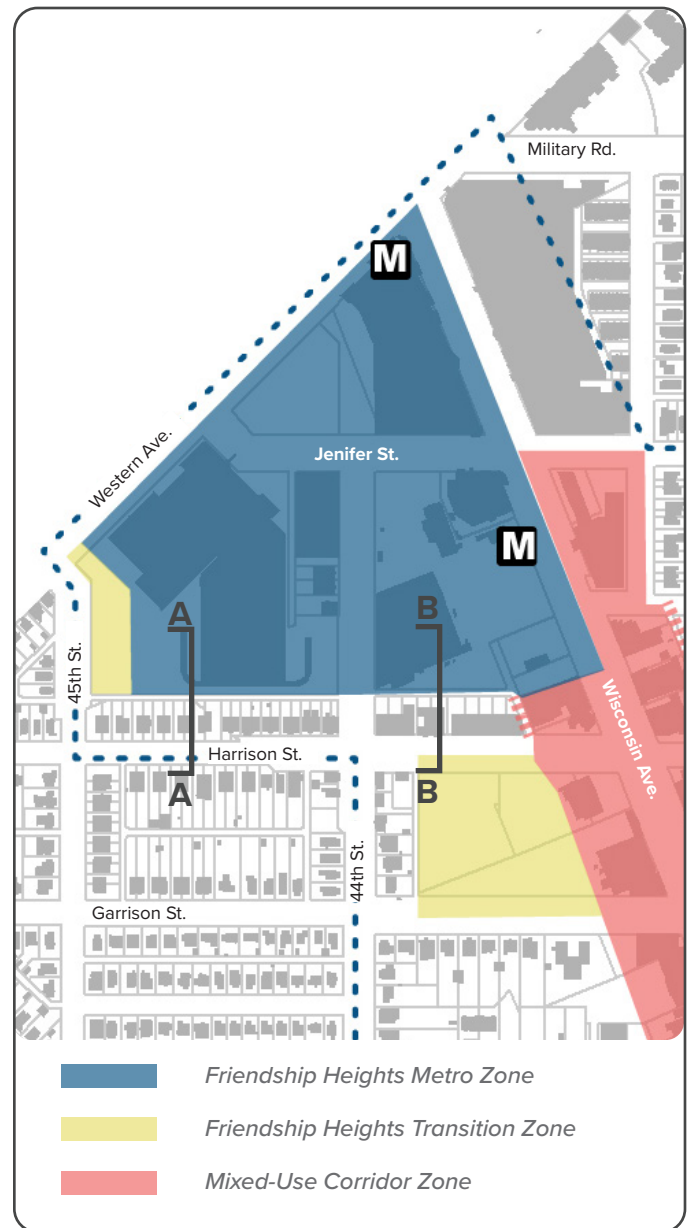
Provide a 1:1 stepback (45-degree angular plane) of building massing above 110 feet. A tower projection compliant with the projection regulations can accentuate corners.

Provide a 1:1 stepback (45-degree angular plane) of building massing from the property line above 65 feet when abutting moderate- or low-density residential zones or an alley abutting moderate- or low-density residential zones.

On the former Lord & Taylor site (Square 1580):

- Provide a 15-foot minimum setback from the property line along the south alley (parallel to Harrison Street). The setback should be improved with landscaping and vegetation.
- Provide a 50-foot minimum stepback from the property line along the south alley (parallel to Harrison Street) and from 45th Street for any building massing rising above 50 feet.
- The bus garage use is exempt from this zone’s lot occupancy standards.

On the current WMATA Western Bus Garage property (Square 1657, lot 0024), establish an east-west pedestrian plaza connecting the Friendship Heights Metro station elevator entrance on Wisconsin Avenue to 44th Street, near the current north-facing façade of the existing garage structure. The pedestrian plaza should be a minimum of 20 feet in width with a 10-foot clearway and visible, linear connections between public sidewalks from one end to the other lined with active residential and commercial ground floor uses. Overhead obstructions should be minimized.



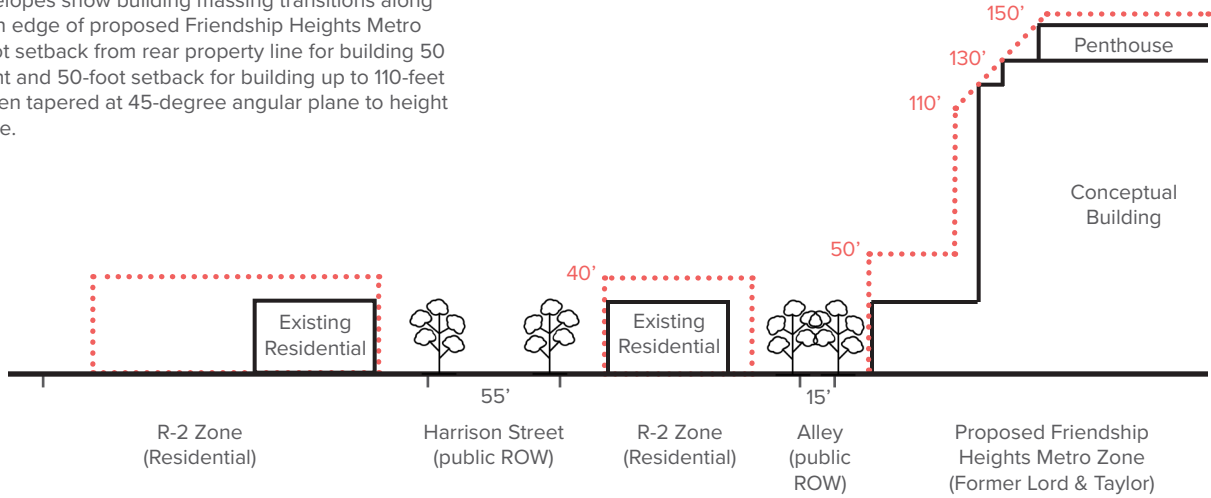
On the “Homeplate” property (Square 1660, lots 0809-0811), establish the private section of 44th Street, subject to current public and private access easements, as a shared street connecting Jenifer Street and Western Avenue.



# Zoning Envelope

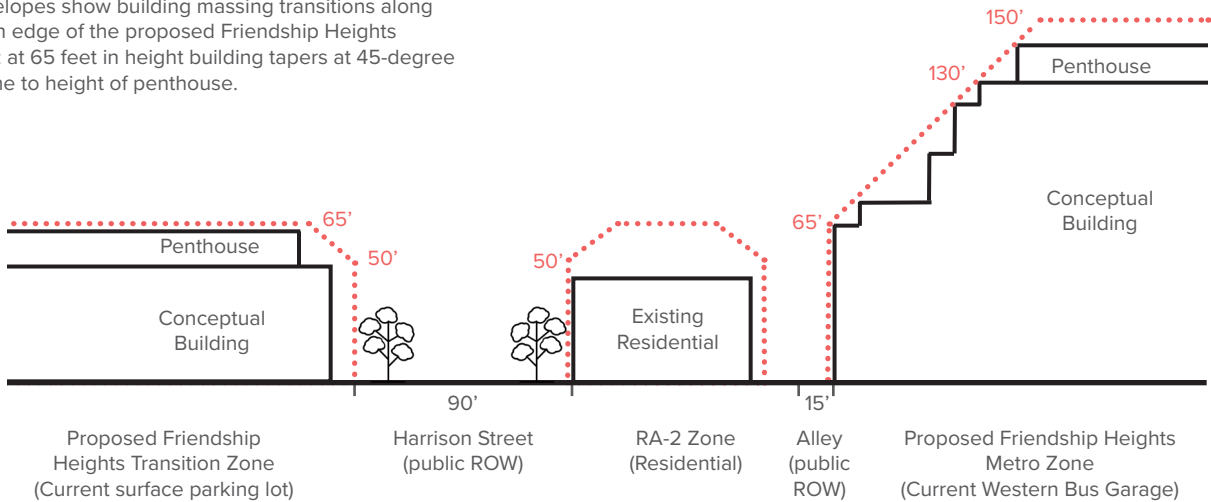
## Section A-A

Zoning envelopes show building massing transitions along the southern edge of proposed Friendship Heights Metro Zone: 15-foot setback from rear property line for building 50 feet in height and 50-foot setback for building up to 110-feet in height, then tapered at 45-degree angular plane to height of penthouse.





## Section B-B

Zoning envelopes show building massing transitions along the southern edge of the proposed Friendship Heights Metro Zone: at 65 feet in height building tapers at 45-degree angular plane to height of penthouse.



### Sections Key

 Zoning Envelope (existing and proposed)

 Building (existing and conceptual)

Sections are 500 feet in length (1 inch = 80 feet). All measurements approximate. Minor elevation change (<3% grade) not shown.

# FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS TRANSITION ZONE

**Building Height:** 50 feet plus penthouse

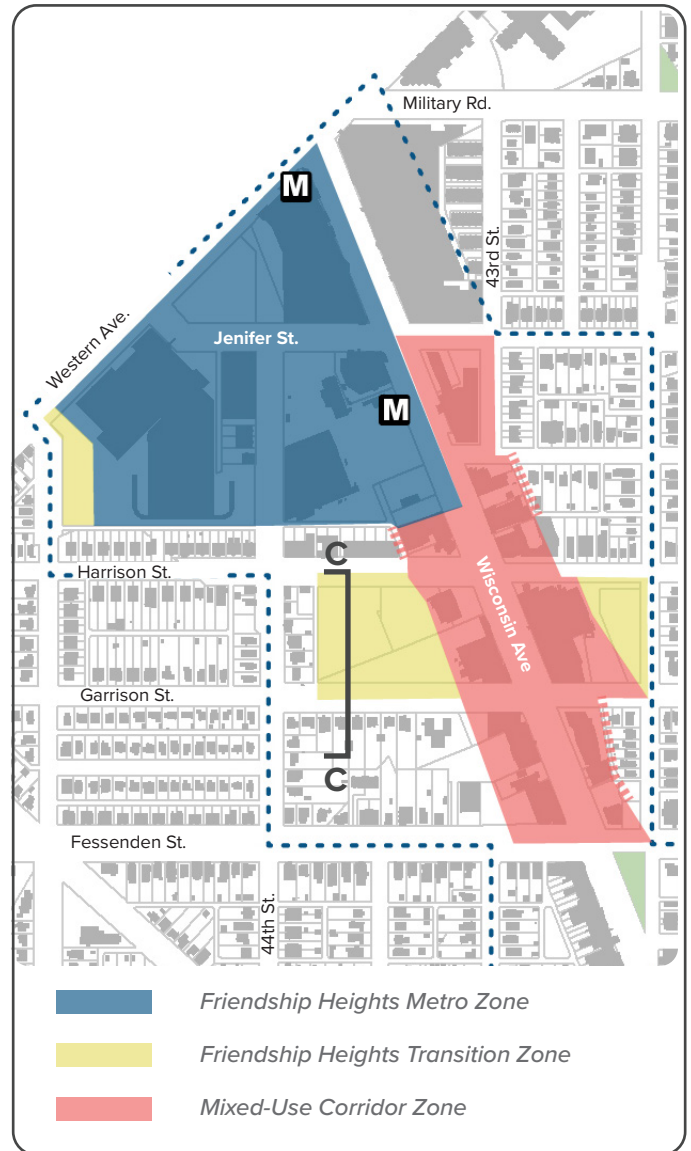
**FAR:** 2.16 Residential (IZ+)

**Lot Occupancy:** 70% (except for proposed bus garage)

## Massing Guidelines

Provide a 12-foot minimum setback from the rear property line (rear yard).

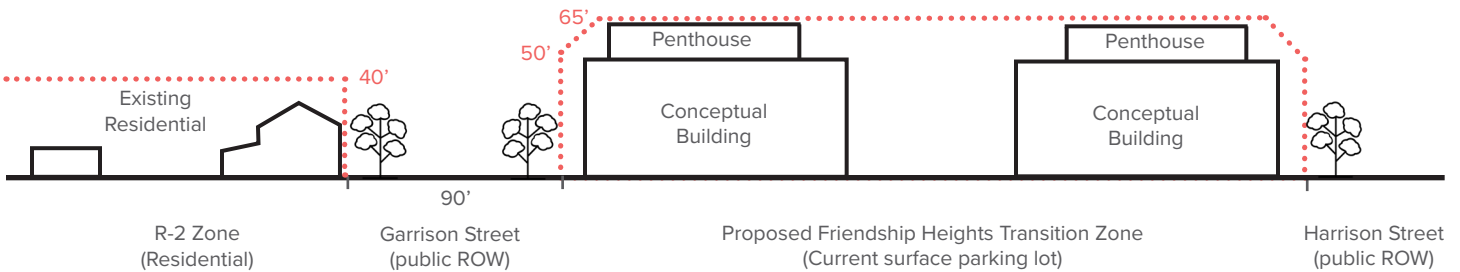
On the former Lord & Taylor site (Square 1580), provide a 15-foot minimum setback from the property line on 45th Street. The setback should be enhanced with landscaping and vegetation. The bus garage use is exempt from this zone's lot occupancy standards.



## Zoning Envelope

### Section C-C

Zoning envelope of the proposed Friendship Heights Transition Zone rises to 50 feet.



## Section Key

Zoning Envelope (existing and proposed)

Building (existing and conceptual)

Section is 600 feet in length (1 inch = 80 feet). All measurements approximate. Minor elevation change (<3% grade) not shown.



# TENLEYTOWN METRO ZONE

**Building Height:** 110 feet plus penthouse

**FAR:** 7.2 Residential (IZ+)  
4.0 Non-residential

**Lot Occupancy:** 80%

## Massing Guidelines

Design buildings with a 1:1 stepback (45-degree angular plane) above 90 feet. A tower projection compliant with the projection regulations can accentuate corners.

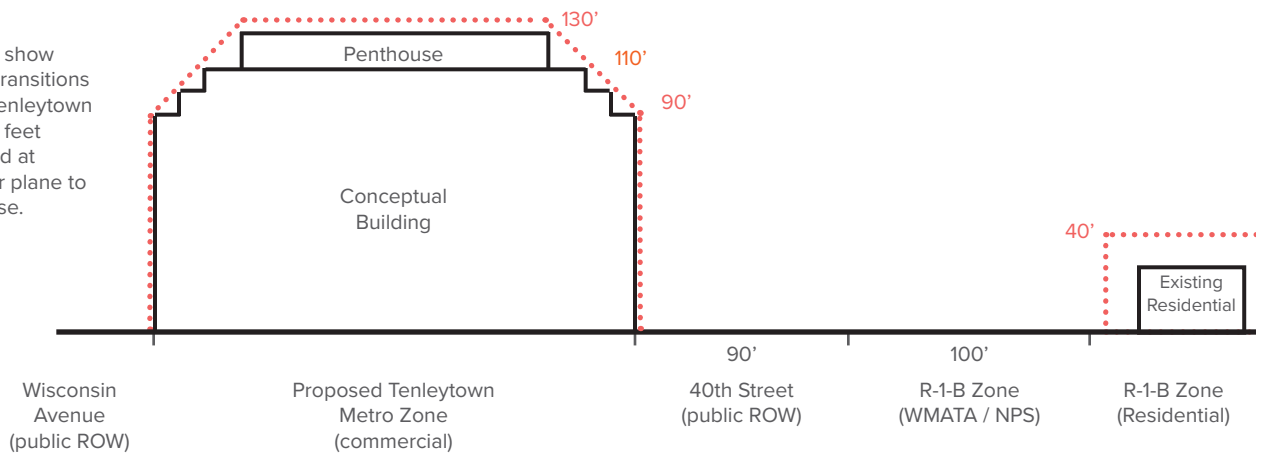
On the block bounded by Wisconsin Avenue, Brandywine Street, 40th Street/Fort Drive, and Albemarle Street (Square 1770), establish an east-west pedestrian plaza, private shared street, or reconfigured public alley connecting Wisconsin Avenue and 40th Street/Fort Drive. The pedestrian passage should be a minimum of 20 feet in width with a 10-foot clearway and visible, linear connections between public sidewalks from one end to the other lined with active residential and commercial ground floor uses. Overhead obstructions should be minimized. If redevelopment on this block requires closure of the existing public alley, this Development Framework should inform District agencies' and Council's evaluation.



## Zoning Envelope

### Section D-D

Zoning envelopes show building massing transitions of the proposed Tenleytown Metro Zone: at 90 feet in height, a tapered at 45-degree angular plane to height of penthouse.



## Section Key

Zoning Envelope (existing and proposed)

Building (existing and conceptual)

Section is 500 feet in length (1 inch = 80 feet). All measurements approximate. Minor elevation change (<3% grade) not shown.

# MIXED-USE CORRIDOR ZONE

**Building Height:** 75 feet plus penthouse

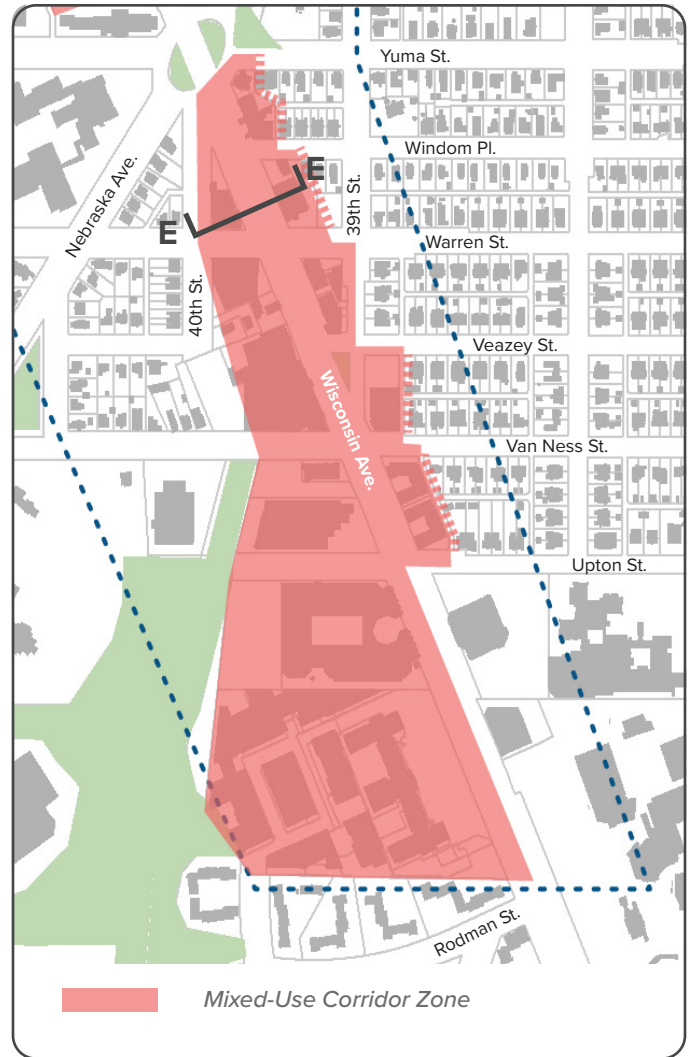
**FAR:** 5.4 Residential (IZ+)  
1.0 Non-residential

**Lot Occupancy:** 80%

## Massing Guidelines

Provide a 12-foot minimum setback from the rear property line (rear yard).

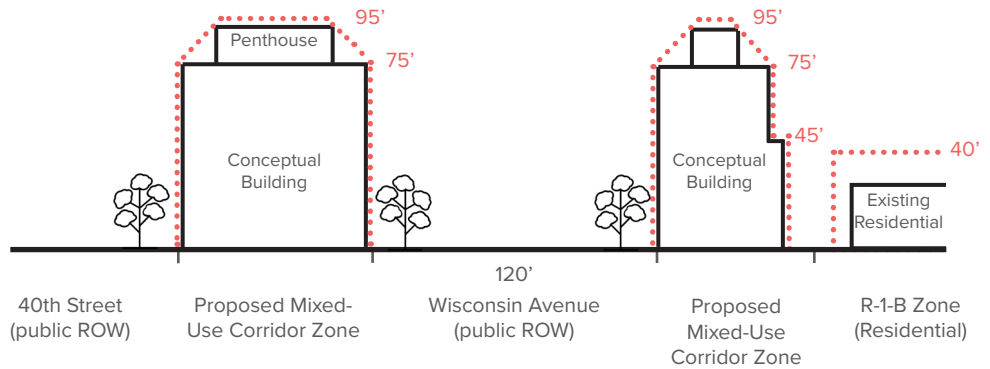
Provide a 6-foot minimum stepback from the property line above 45 feet when abutting low-density residential zones or 55 feet abutting an alley abutting low-density residential zones.



## Zoning Envelope

### Section E-E

Zoning envelopes show building massing transitions along the eastern edge of proposed Mixed-use Corridor Zone abutting a low density property (with no alley): a 12-foot rear yard setback at ground level, then a 6-foot stepback at 45 feet in building height.



### Section Key

Zoning Envelope (existing and proposed)

Building (existing and conceptual)

Section is 400 feet in length (1 inch = 80 feet). All measurements approximate. Minor elevation change (<3% grade) not shown.



# Wisconsin Avenue Streetscape

Wisconsin Avenue is one of the District’s major thoroughfares and as a “long-established road,” its irregular alignment follows natural topography to connect communities that pre-date the L’Enfant plan for the city. The relationship between public space and adjacent buildings can contribute to the character of Wisconsin Avenue by:

- Enhancing memorable views along the corridor that frame important neighborhood and national institutions and parks, or along streets that terminate or connect to key public spaces, and
- Creating a distinctive gateway at the Western Avenue point of entry to the District that provides a sense arrival through improvements in the form of landscaping, public art, commemoration, and roadway design.



*The Amenity Area on Connecticut Avenue in DC includes seating, lighting, street trees, and landscaped planting beds.*

## Streetscape Identity

The public space of the streetscape along the corridor is envisioned to accommodate a range of activities. However, there should be elements that unify the avenue which include the standardized placement and treatments for tree boxes, street trees, sidewalk materials, and furniture. These elements are consistently arranged in the public space between curb and property line into three areas:

- The **Amenity Area** at the curb is for tree boxes, street trees, streetlights, trash and recycling receptacles, benches, bicycle racks, and other standard amenities.
- The **Circulation Area** for uninterrupted and continuous pedestrian travel that is well-defined and clear of obstructions.
- The **Tenant Zone** or **Landscaped Area** lies between the Circulation Area and property line and is designed in response to the ground floor use of the adjacent building. There is flexibility for how this area is designed, in accordance with public space and projection regulations allowances.



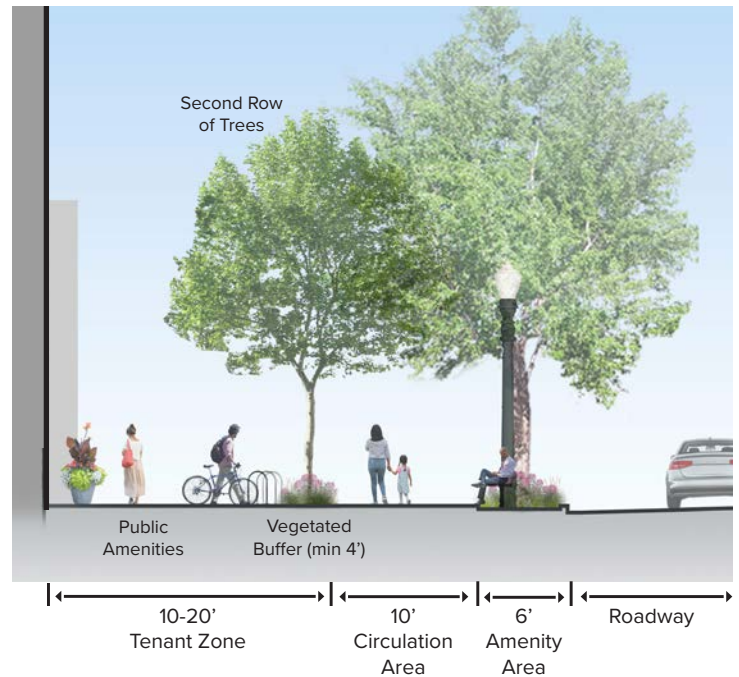
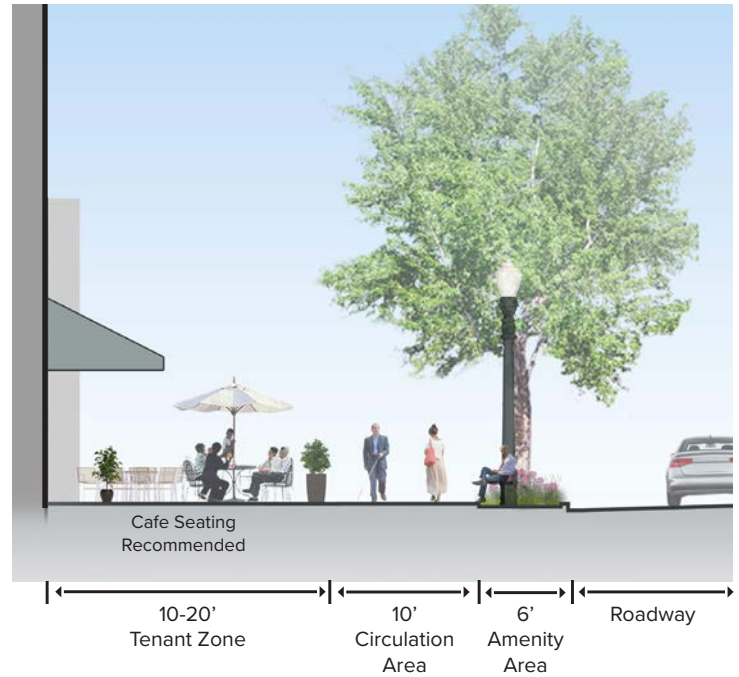
*1101 K Street in DC includes a second row of trees, special lighting, and greenery in the Tenant Zone of the streetscape. Source: mkskstudios.com*

# COMMERCIAL STREETSCAPES

Wisconsin Avenue’s commercial streetscapes should have wider sidewalks to accommodate greater volumes of pedestrian travel in the Circulation Area and flexibility for uses that support active public life in the Tenant Zone, such as sidewalk cafés, sidewalk sales, public art, and neighborhood gatherings. Commercial streetscapes will accompany non-residential ground floor uses offering two variations of the Tenant Zone, based on whether a sidewalk café is present and the programmed activation of the building façade.

The Tenant Zone should be paved with gray, poured-in-place concrete with three-foot by three-foot scoring, with exceptions for building entrances\*. Public amenities should be incorporated that support walking and socializing for people of all ages and abilities, such as benches, bike racks, and lighting. Unique amenities such as public art, fountains, and special lighting are encouraged to create destinations with distinct identities.

Where the building frontage is not fully activated and where conditions allow, include at the back of the sidewalk a vegetated buffer with a minimum width of four feet for a second row of trees.



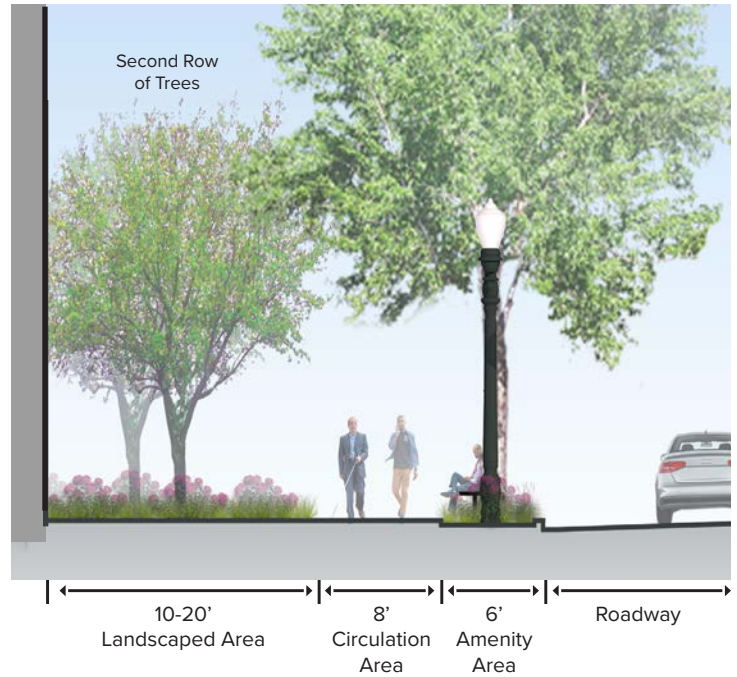
\* Special paving that is twice the width the primary entrances and one-third the width of the sidewalk between back of curb and property line is allowed and encouraged.



## RESIDENTIAL STREETSCAPES

Wisconsin Avenue's residential streetscapes should incorporate a greater amount of green space to support a comfortable walking environment and an increased residential population. Residential streetscapes will accompany residential ground floor uses.

The Landscaped Area should be predominantly dedicated to landscaping, with exceptions for building entrances\*. The width of the Landscaped Area on Wisconsin Avenue is ideal for supporting a second row of trees defining the pedestrian clear path of travel while enhancing the District's tree canopy. Like the Tenant Zone in the Commercial Streetscapes, the Landscaped Area is to be maintained by the abutting property owner.



\* Special paving that is twice the width the primary entrances and one-third the width of the sidewalk between back of curb and property line is allowed and encouraged.

## STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

### Continuous Walkway

The corridor's Circulation Area should provide a continuous pedestrian clear path of travel comprised of gray, poured-in-place concrete with three-foot by three-foot scoring. Minimum widths should vary based on abutting density, mix of uses, and proximity to Metro stations, as follows:

- 10 feet on blocks between Western Avenue and Fessenden Street;
- Eight feet on blocks between Fessenden Street and Brandywine Street;
- 10 feet on blocks between Brandywine Street and Tenley Circle; and
- Eight feet on blocks between Tenley Circle and Rodman Street.

### Curb Cuts

New curb cuts on Wisconsin Avenue are strongly discouraged and typically not permitted, especially where alley access exists. New curb cuts may be possible where multiple existing driveway accesses are consolidated and designed such that they are of the least width possible when crossing the sidewalk.

### Street Trees

Preserve existing street trees in good to excellent condition. Space new trees in areas without overhead wires between 30 to 40 feet on center. Where overhead wires remain, space new trees 20 to 25 feet. In areas where many new trees can be planted in a row (e.g., with new development or sidewalk reconfiguration) the spacing should be approximately 30 feet on center. Tree boxes should be between four and six feet wide and as long as possible.

Native varieties with similar form and habit should be used and a diversity of species is ecologically healthier. Coordinate tree species and spacing with DDOT's Urban Forestry Division.

### Ground Cover Planting

Well-landscaped spaces enhance the urban environment by remediating stormwater, reducing heat island effects, improving air quality, and increasing biodiversity. Planting beds in the streetscape should create a lush, full effect.

### Green Infrastructure

Incorporate green infrastructure such as permeable pavement at locations approved by DDOT, additional street trees, and bioretention planters where feasible. Use local, native materials and minimize the use of impervious paving.

### Lighting

Typical street lighting should follow the District's Streetlight Policy and Design Guidelines. Special lighting can add visual interest, variety, and depth to the streetscape at strategic locations such as plazas, parks, intersections, and within tenant areas; however, it should avoid glare. Special lighting may highlight public art and be integrated into furnishings. All special lighting is subject to DDOT review on a case-by-case basis and cannot be used as an alternative to traditional street lighting.

### Street Furnishings

Street furniture along the corridor should accommodate a range of ages and abilities. Café seating and other comfortable seating areas are recommended to enhance opportunities for outdoor dining and socializing. Seating should be located to enable pedestrians to view street and sidewalk activities while being outside of the immediate flow of pedestrian traffic.

Trash and recycling receptacles and bike racks should be included along the corridor to support activity areas near commercial areas, transit stops, plazas, and parks. Furnishings can include neighborhood branding, such as logos and colors.



### Public Art and Wayfinding Signage

Public art and wayfinding signage can thematically differentiate commercial nodes while enhancing people’s experience navigating busy urban areas. Locations for public art include intersections, plazas, parks, and Tenant/Amenity Areas. Wayfinding signage should be placed at transit plazas, bus stops, and parks.

Business directories developed and maintained by commercial management associations should be located at key commercial nodes. Parking wayfinding signage will make off-street visitor parking locations more apparent.

### Building Projections

The city’s projection regulations allow for building elements in the streetscape, such as bay and oriel windows, balconies, show windows, roof overhangs and architectural trims. These architectural elements should be used to enhance the public realm to break down the building mass along the streetwall and create a comfortable and human-scale experience along the streetscape. Tower-like projections are recommended at the terminus of visual corridors or next to open spaces.

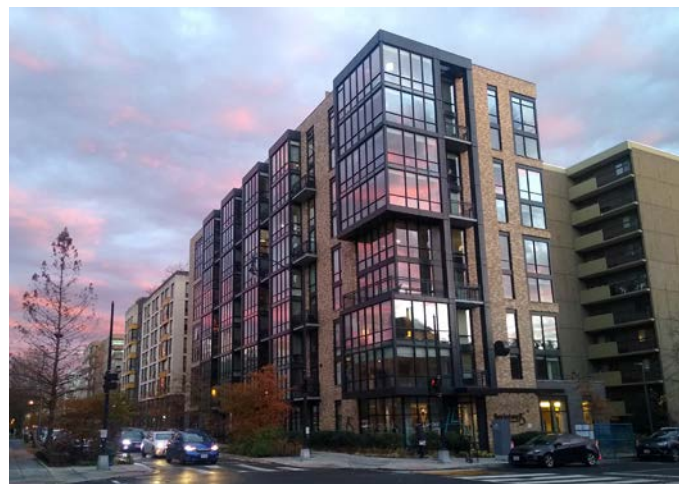
### Utilities

Overhead utilities should be placed underground as part of ongoing redevelopment projects and streetscape improvements to avoid obstructing pedestrian travel and minimize impacts on the visual character of the streetscape.

Grated PEPCO vaults are not allowed in pedestrian walkways and banks of above-grade utility meters are not allowed in public space. When supported by District agencies, PEPCO vaults can be located in alleys or in public space when surrounded with a minimum three feet of landscaping. Utility meters located in areaways are also acceptable.



*Seating in the I Street streetscape at CityCenterDC is located to provide comfortable places to sit and socialize. Source: Lee & Associates*



*Building projections on V Street in DC create a more dynamic streetwall and contribute to the city’s public life.*

# Planning Process

The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework is a part of the broader Rock Creek West Corridors Planning Initiative to support the need for housing, particularly affordable housing, at high-capacity transit nodes, while supporting an active public realm and commercial sustainability along the corridor. With future land uses established in the Comp Plan, this Development Framework focused on increased building heights and densities on the corridor.

An Existing Conditions Report completed at the outset of the planning process contains background information on demographics, housing, economic, retail, and social trends, as well as spatial analysis of the built environment.

The planning approach centered the Comp Plan's emphasis on racial equity and sought to explore a key question: "How has planning influenced the more racially homogenous landscape in the study area today and how can this trajectory change towards a more equitable future?" This framing has helped guide the planning process in the following ways:

- Documenting and acknowledging historical discriminatory land use and development practices through an existing conditions analysis;
- Disaggregating demographic and community participation data by race, gender, and other socio-economic factors, where possible, to indicate inequitable outcomes and tailor outreach and design recommendations accordingly;
- Underscoring the equity policies identified in the Comp Plan for transportation, housing, urban design, and historic preservation; and
- Conducting a transparent and open engagement process that begins with acknowledging and listening to diverse voices from the neighborhood and seeking to expand opportunities for participation, particularly in underrepresented groups such residents of color, renters, young families, and small business owners.

Creating the Development Framework required a clear and candid community engagement strategy. This included exploring the nexus between streetscape and building design, housing and affordable housing development, land use economics, retail strategy and viability, racial equity, and history.

Goals for community engagement included:

- Design and implement creative and meaningful ways to invite residents to participate in the planning process;
- Engage a diverse audience in the process and amplify underrepresented voices; and
- Solicit ideas for creating expanded housing opportunities for current and future residents across demographic lines while increasing access to amenities.

To achieve these goals, OP held a range of in-person and online activities that were open to the public or targeted to specific groups.

## Racial Equity in the Comp Plan

The Comp Plan states that racial equity is achieved 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."

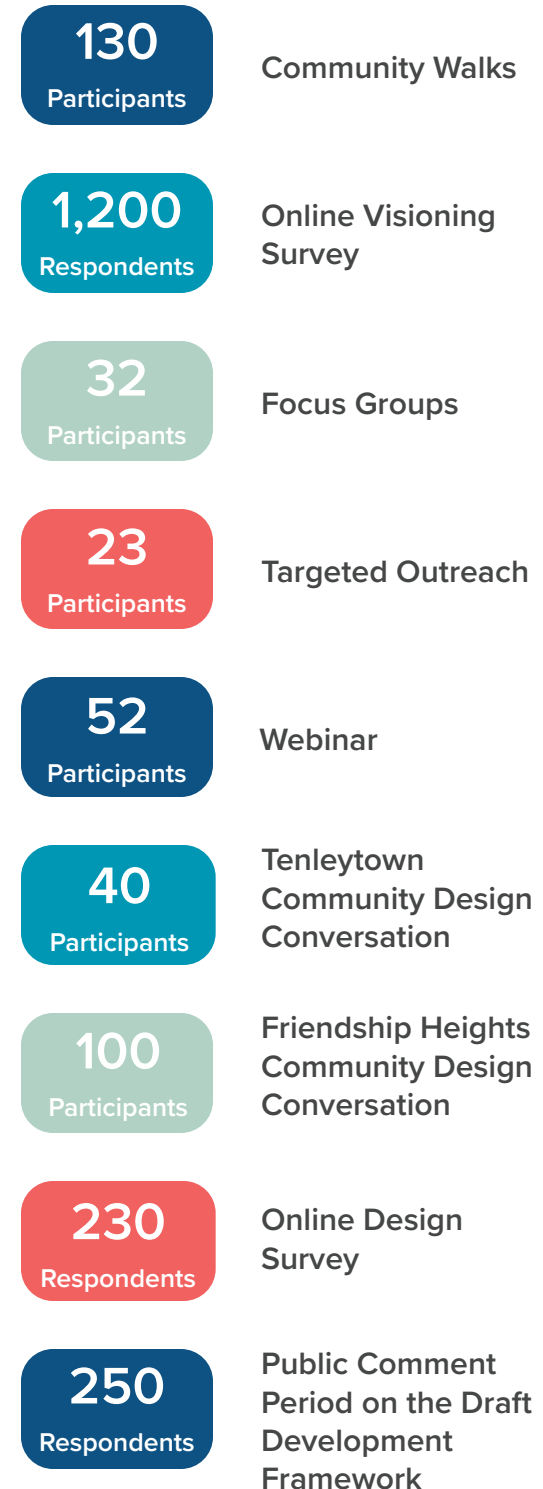


Opportunities to participate online, focus group conversations with targeted groups/perspectives, pop-ups at neighborhood events, and door-to-door discussions with local business owners provided the project team with input from a cross-section of the community. A record of all the outputs shared and key feedback received was posted to the project website for the duration of the planning process.

The planning process included multiple check-ins with ANC 3E, local advocacy groups focused on housing and development, as well as two place management organizations, the Friendship Heights Alliance and Tenleytown Main Street. These groups were key partners in developing and promoting engagement activities for the Development Framework, hosting opportunities for community dialogue, and advancing District policy goals along the corridor. The project team also coordinated with the DDOT and WMATA teams actively managing projects in the study area, as well as with the Montgomery County Planning Department, which is conducting an urban design study on the Maryland side of Friendship Heights.

The draft Development Framework was released for public review and comment from September 26 through November 15, 2023. During the comment period, the project team attended publicly noticed meetings hosted by ANCs 3A and 3E and tabled at the Friendship Heights Holiday Market on Wisconsin Avenue. OP received comments submitted via an online form on the project website or by email from over 250 individuals, organizations, and affected ANCs. In response to public comment, OP made several revisions to the final Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework.

## Engagement by the Numbers



The Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework's recommendations were informed by the following themes that emerged from community engagement activities:



### **HOUSING**

Create more multifamily housing, especially affordable housing, that accommodates a range of household types and sizes.



### **INCLUSIVITY**

Identify types and locations of urban public spaces, including small plazas, playgrounds, and gardens, for people of all ages and abilities.



### **SAFETY**

Prioritize a safe and enjoyable walking experience that minimizes conflicts with automobiles, transit, bicycles, and scooters while enhancing access between Metro station entrances and bus stops.



### **COORDINATION**

Coordinate development activities with future transit investments including the Tenleytown Multimodal Access Project and the WMATA Western Bus Garage redevelopment.



### **PLACEKEEPING**

Highlight, enhance, and adaptively re-use neighborhood historic assets and public spaces.



### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Use site and building design strategies, systems, and materials that reduce energy and water use, and benefit the environment.



### **COMMERCE**

Increase support for thriving and resilient local businesses that serve the neighborhood and broader community along an active corridor.



### **ACTIVITY**

Enliven the public realm with uses and design elements that promote a welcoming and active street life, celebrate the neighborhood, and showcase design creativity.



# DISTRICT PLANNING RESOURCES

## Planning and Zoning

- [Wisconsin Avenue Development Framework Existing Conditions Report](#) (2022)
- [Rock Creek West Roadmap](#) (2021)
- [Tenleytown Public Life Study](#) (2019)
- [DC Interactive Zoning Map](#)
- [DC Zoning Handbook](#)
- [Commemorative Works Program](#)

## Housing

- [36,000 Housing Count](#) (DMPED Economic Intelligence Dashboard)
- [The Housing Production Trust Fund](#)
- [Housing Equity Report](#) (2019)

## Historic Preservation

- [HistoryQuest](#) (online map)
- [Ward 3 Heritage Guide](#) (2020)

## Transportation and Right of Way

- [moveDC: Multimodal Long-Range Transportation Plan](#) (2021)
- [DDOT Bus Priority Plan](#) (2021)
- [Public Realm Design Manual](#) (2019)
- [Building Projections in Washington, DC](#)
- [DDOT Green Infrastructure](#)

## School Planning

- [DC Edscape](#) (DME online interactive datasets)

## Parks and Recreation

- [Ready2Play: Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) (2023)

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Affordable Housing:** Income- and rent-restricted housing supported or subsidized by local and federal programs for households ranging from extremely low-income, earning less than 30 percent of the Median Family Income (MFI), up to households earning less than 80 percent of the MFI.

**Design Review:** The purpose of Design Review is to promote high-quality, contextual design, by allowing for review against specified criteria. The process entails a public hearing with review and approval by the Zoning Commission.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** The ratio of the total gross floor area of a building to the area of its lot measured in accordance with Subtitle 303 of the Zoning Regulations.

**Inclusionary Zoning Plus (IZ+):** Adopted in 2021, IZ+ seeks to achieve higher affordability set-asides from the District's regular IZ program when properties receive a change in zoning that permits greater density. The affordable set-aside requirements for IZ+ can increase the affordability requirements from the existing requirement of 8% to 12.5% to as much as 20%.

**Median Family Income (MFI):** The median household income for the Washington Metropolitan Area (including suburban Maryland and Virginia), stratified by household size. The MFI for a household of four in the Washington Metropolitan Area, as published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2022, was \$142,300.

**Placemaking:** The intentional use of public space to create experiences that connect people, inspire action, support creativity, and celebrate the unique aspects of neighborhoods.

**Placekeeping:** The active care and maintenance of a place and its social fabric by the people who live and work there. More than just preserving buildings, placekeeping intends to keep a place's cultural memories alive while supporting the ability of locals to maintain their way of life as they choose.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD):** PUDs provide developers additional density and zoning flexibility when they seek to build projects that exceed existing matter-of-right zoning regulations. In exchange for this flexibility, developers are required to provide community benefits, such as increased affordable housing.

**Pedestrian-Scale / Human-Scale:** The proportional relationship between the dimensions of a building or building element, street, outdoor space or streetscape element and the average dimensions of the human body, taking into account the perceptions and traveling speed of a typical pedestrian.

**Public Realm:** The area under public and private ownership that is publicly accessible and experienced from public space.

**Streetwall:** Refers to the line of building façades that face a street. They shape the level of visual interest on each block and create a sense of enclosure for travelers.

**Urban Design:** Addresses a neighborhood's design and visual qualities, ultimately shaping perceptions of the District and contributing to the way people interact and experience the environment around them.



# Acknowledgments

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## District of Columbia Council

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**WISCONSIN AVENUE  
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

