

A Vision for Growing an Inclusive City

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FOREWORD

This document provides a policy framework for the update of the Washington, DC Comprehensive Plan. It is not the Comprehensive Plan itself, nor does it legally change or amend the existing Plan.

On June 30, 2004, the Council of the District of Columbia conducted a public hearing on this document and subsequently passed a resolution concurring with its general direction. The resolution did not formally or statutorily adopt the Vision, nor did it make its maps and illustrations official statements of public policy.

Instead, the Vision lays the foundation for the community dialogue that will lead to an adopted, updated Comprehensive Plan in 2006. It identifies the major issues and challenges to be addressed in the upcoming Plan update. It also establishes the basic premise that the city must grow more inclusively to achieve its full potential. The Vision also outlines a new way of organizing the Comprehensive Plan, with a focus on three major challenges rather than traditional topics such as housing and transportation.

During the next 18 months, the ideas and concepts presented in this Vision will continue to be researched and analyzed. Many established policies from the previous Comprehensive Plan will be carried forward and many new policies will be drafted. Issues that are not covered by this report will undoubtedly arise through this process. These issues should be addressed without losing sight of the overarching goal of growing more inclusively.

A commitment to grow inclusively also means a commitment to plan inclusively. With that in mind, this document has also been designed to raise public awareness of the critical challenges facing our city. Its intent is to engage residents from all neighborhoods and backgrounds in making the key choices that will shape Washington, DC's future.



INTRODUCTION:

Shaping the Vision for DC

Washington DC—our nation's capital and home to almost 600,000 people—has reached a pivotal moment in its evolution as a city. A booming economy, a hot housing market, and improved government services are transforming the landscape before our very eyes. After more than two centuries of development, Washington is reaching the stature of other great world capitals—places like London, Paris, and Tokyo.

A closer look at our landscape, however, reveals a legacy we have yet to overcome. We remain a divided city. We are geographically divided by race, educational attainment, income, and employment. Physical barriers, such as rail lines and freeways, only compound our social and economic divides.

This document, **A VISION FOR GROWING AN INCLUSIVE CITY**, seeks to move our city beyond these divides. The Vision is intended to guide an update of our city's Comprehensive Plan, the legally mandated document that regulates how and where we grow. With the Comprehensive Plan update before us, there is no better time for Washingtonians and DC government to make the hard choices that will create a more inclusive city for future generations.

Growing inclusively means that individuals and families are not confined to particular economic and geographic boundaries but are able to make important choices—choices about where they live, how and where they earn a living, how they get around the city, and where their children go to school. Growing inclusively also means that every resident can make these choices—regardless of whether they have lived here for generations or moved here last week, and regardless of their race, income, or age.

Our citizens and political leaders have collectively expressed the desire to pursue this goal. The question now is—what will it take to get us there?

It's time for DC residents to plan our own city—the city we know beyond the monuments and museums.

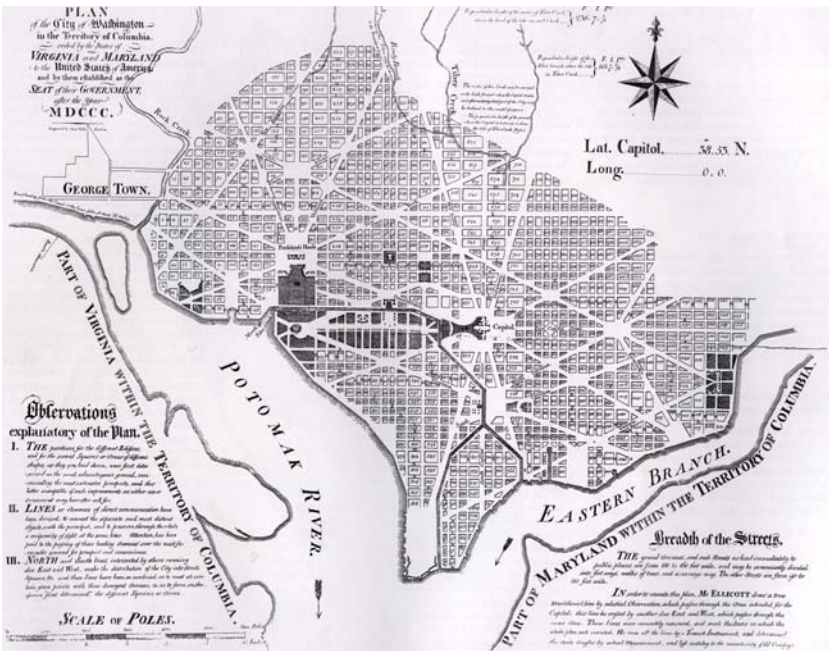
Why We Need This Vision

This vision begins by building on Washington's solid foundation of planning

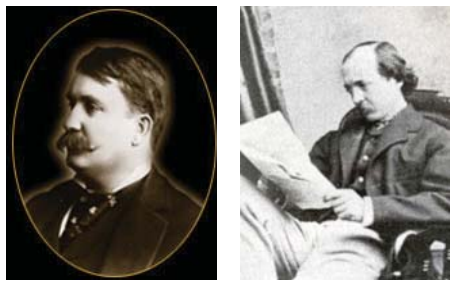
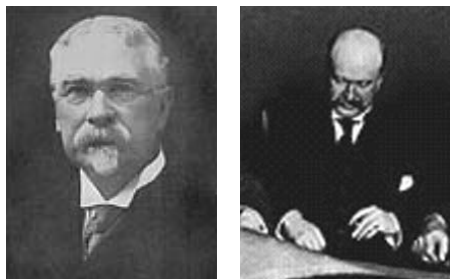
More than 200 years ago, George Washington commissioned Pierre L'Enfant to plan a new national capital city on the banks of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. In less than six months, L'Enfant designed Washington's unique diagonal and grid street system and located some of America's most symbolic landmarks, including the US Capitol and the White House.



George Washington Pierre L'Enfant



The Washington DC Plan, 1792.



Clockwise, from top left: Senator McMillan and three members of the Commission: Charles F. McKim, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Daniel Burnham.

One hundred years later, the McMillan Commission was asked to raise Washington's status to that of a world-class capital city. It responded by beautifying Washington with the National Mall and many neighborhood parks and by expanding Rock Creek Park.

A great deal of long-range planning, involving many dedicated DC residents, has taken place since the District was granted home rule in 1973. Yet as recently as a few years ago, the federal government was still planning our future. Some plans suggested extending federal development along key boulevards with little attention paid to our neighborhoods nearby. While many worthwhile ideas were proposed, Washington is much more than a Federal city. It is home to 130 diverse neighborhoods, a thriving downtown, rich local history, unique cultural assets, and a diverse population. Because we know the city best, we are in the best position to guide its future.



The McMillan Plan, 1902.

Maybe a handful of leaders can plan a nation's capital but it will take our residents to plan an inclusive city

The first step in planning to become an inclusive city is to conduct an honest appraisal of where we stand today:

DC IS GAINING NEW RESIDENTS

People are packing up the moving vans and coming back to the city. In some cases, residents that once lived here are returning to make DC their home again. Since 2000, 8,000 new housing units have been built, and 20,000 more homes are planned for construction over the next five to ten years.

RETAIL THAT FLED DURING THE 1960S AND 1970S IS RETURNING

New grocery stores, local entrepreneurs, superstores (such as Home Depot), and sit-down restaurants are providing new choices in our neighborhoods.

DC'S DOWNTOWN IS THRIVING AND DIVERSIFYING

It's now the third-largest central city office market in the country. Meanwhile, new housing, retail, and entertainment are turning Downtown into a "24-hour" neighborhood.

DC GOVERNMENT HAS A STRONG RECORD OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Control Board, appointed by Congress in 1995 to oversee the management of our city, disbanded in 2001. Since then, DC government has balanced the budget every year, demonstrating our capability to self-govern.



It will take our residents to plan an inclusive city.

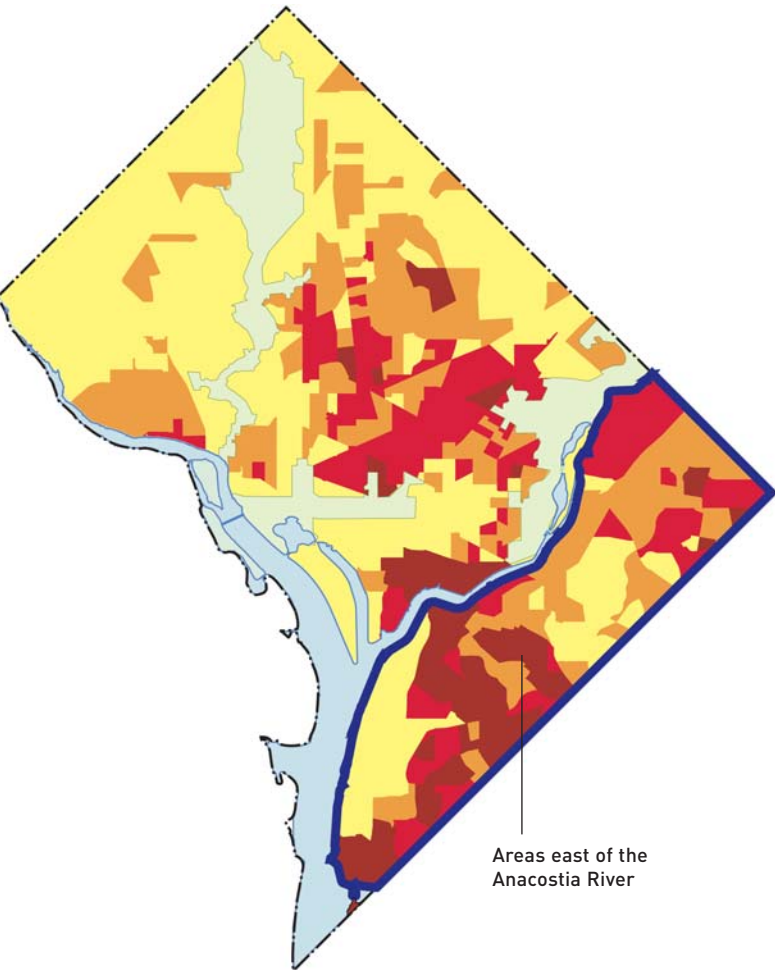
And yet, even during such progress...

Why We Need This Vision

...Our city is divided by inequities:

INCOME

Some parts of our city are prospering while others are not. Poverty actually became more concentrated during the 1990s (predominantly in areas east of the Anacostia River), a trend that runs counter to what happened in most US cities.



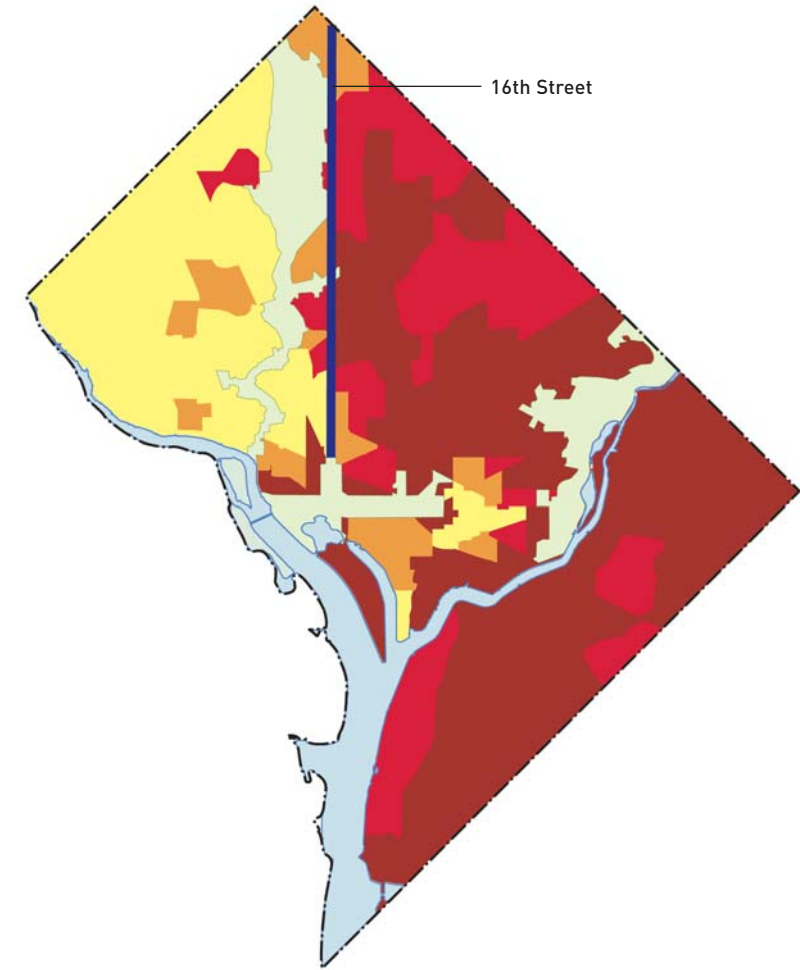
Poverty rate in 2000

- 0-13 percent
- 13-26 percent
- 26-44 percent
- 44-91 percent

Mapped by Census block group, adjusted for institutional uses.

EDUCATION

In areas west of 16th Street, more than half of our residents have college degrees. In most neighborhoods to the east, less than 20 percent hold a college degree.



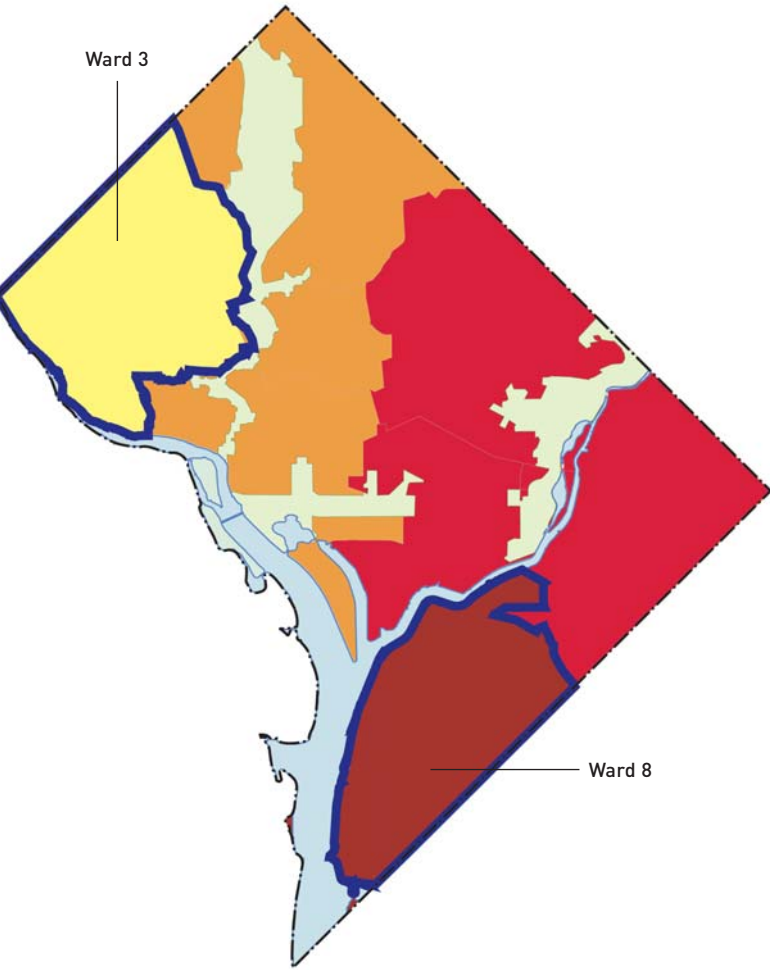
Percent of persons 25 and older without college degrees in 2000

- 0-25 percent
- 25-50 percent
- 50-75 percent
- 75-100 percent

Mapped by Census tract.

EMPLOYMENT

In Ward 3, the unemployment rate is 2 percent. In Ward 8, it's 13 percent.



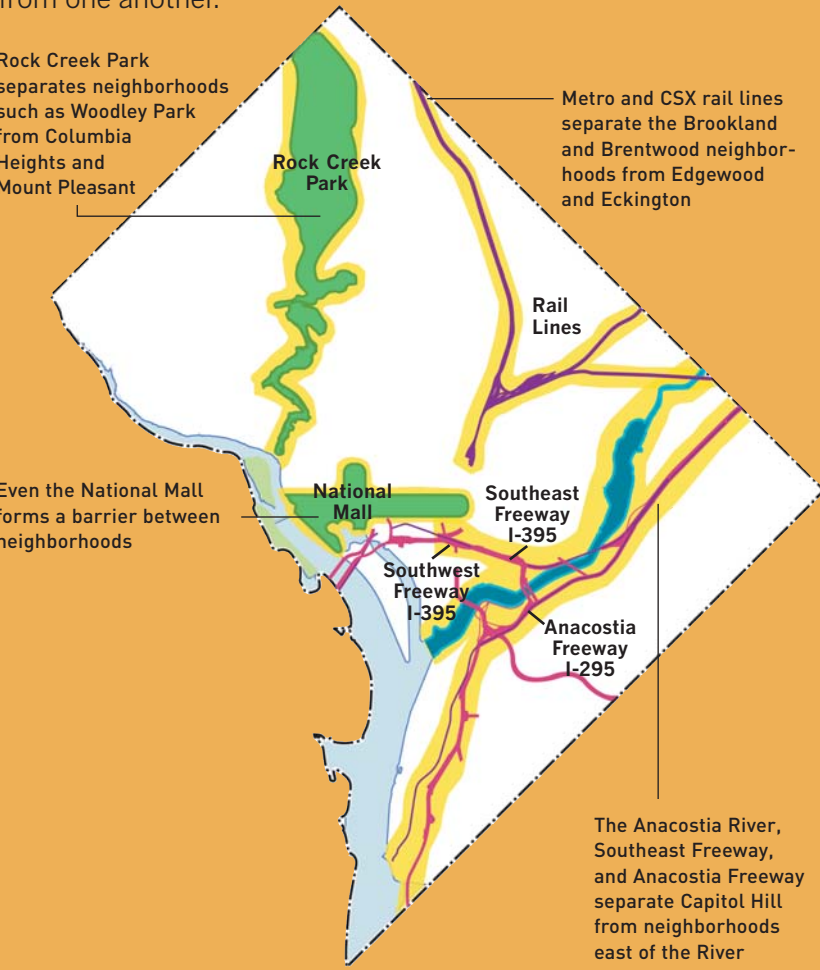
Percent unemployment in 2002

- Less than 3 percent
- 3-7 percent
- 7-12 percent
- Greater than 12 percent

Mapped by Ward.

AND PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Our city is also divided by physical barriers. These include rail lines in Northeast, the Southwest/Southeast Freeway, the Anacostia River, Rock Creek Park, and large pieces of federal property. While some of these barriers, such as Rock Creek Park, are treasures, they still separate neighborhoods from one another.





How the Vision was Created

Almost 90 percent of the participants in the November 2003 Citizen Summit agreed: creating an inclusive city is one of DC’s highest priorities.

An important step in shaping this Vision was to identify and analyze many of the key issues and challenges facing our city. To do this, the DC Office of Planning commissioned eight papers by industry experts. These papers examine issues of social equity, transportation, housing, historic preservation, environment, education, economic development, and urban design.

Building on the insights gained from the eight papers, the Office of Planning met with other government agencies and citizens and organized discussion groups to review the overall findings. After these meetings, a draft Vision was created.

Mayor Anthony A. Williams presented the draft Vision at the Citizen Summit on November 15, 2003. More than 3,000 citizens of different ages, races and cultures came together from all neighborhoods of the city to discuss citywide priorities. That day, almost 90 percent of the participants told the Mayor that creating an inclusive city is an important—if not the highest—priority for DC. The Mayor also presented the draft Vision at Neighborhood Summit meetings in all Wards in February 2004.

As you read this report, you may find that some of the strategies for growing inclusively are not new. In fact, many of these ideas have already been put to work. This Vision has evolved through more than four years of collaboration by committed citizens, nonprofits, businesses, institutions, faith-based organizations, the DC government, and many others. Together, these groups have worked to develop neighborhood plans, discuss transportation projects, determine how to improve our parks and recreation centers, and address many other important issues.



Citizens shape the Vision at neighborhood and citywide meetings.

One Vision—Three Challenges

Growing inclusively is the singular expression of our vision for DC’s future. It means strengthening our city in a way that reflects our values and goals as DC residents—protecting the things we cherish about the city while making changes that reconcile inequities. This one goal should shape the way we plan our neighborhoods, the way we educate our children and expand our economy, and the way we develop the infrastructure that ties our city together. It is the underlying result that will be pursued as we update our Comprehensive Plan.

We must address three challenges to become inclusive

FIRST...CREATING SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOODS BY:

- Strengthening neighborhood identity
- Creating housing choices
- Strategically guiding growth
- Improving environmental health
- Targeting investment in neighborhoods.

SECOND...INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT BY:

- Improving education quality
- Preparing residents for employment
- Expanding the economy into our neighborhoods
- Continuing to diversify our Central Employment Area.

THIRD...CONNECTING THE WHOLE CITY BY:

- Creating new public spaces
- Investing in transportation
- Transforming corridors
- Connecting our greenways and waterways
- Building federal and regional ties.

These three challenges form the key chapters of this document. Each chapter includes three components: 1) where we are today, 2) where we hope to be tomorrow, and 3) getting there. “Getting there” is particularly important because it provides overarching direction for the Comprehensive Plan revision. Because of the legal power of the Comprehensive Plan to guide land use, it will become one of the most important tools for translating this Vision into reality.



Updating DC’s Comprehensive Plan

The District’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1984. It provides policy and planning guidance on a range of issues, including economic development, environmental protection, housing, historic preservation, and transportation. It also guides our zoning laws, such as the types of uses allowed in residential and commercial areas and the maximum height of buildings. In 2002, the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia asked the DC Office of Planning to

conduct a thorough review of the Comprehensive Plan. With the help of a public task force, the Office of Planning determined that the Plan was out of date and failed to address many of the key challenges facing our city today. Both the Mayor and Council approved a recommendation to revise the Comprehensive Plan. The Office of Planning is leading this effort, which is now underway.



Our DC Tomorrow: A More Inclusive City

Creating a more equitable city that works for everyone will require more than individual strategies. We need a collective vision that offers real solutions to three major challenges:

THE FIRST CHALLENGE:

Creating Successful Neighborhoods

IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

All neighborhoods will have a strong identity
pg. 23

Our historic treasures will be protected and celebrated
pg. 25

Neighborhoods across the city will provide a wider range of housing types and prices
pg. 27

Special needs housing will be more equitably distributed across the city
pg. 29

We will create new places to live, work and play around transit stations, along boulevards, and on surplus government land...
pg. 32

...and transform abandoned buildings into attractive homes
pg. 33

Growth Around Metro Stops

New Neighborhood Sites

We will create a greener, healthier city
pg. 35

All neighborhoods will have safe, clean, accessible parks
pg. 37

Emerging neighborhoods will be transformed into vibrant communities
pg. 40

THE SECOND CHALLENGE:

Increasing Access to Education and Employment for All

IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

We will become a "City of Learning"
pg. 45

Our institutions will help sustain healthy communities
pg. 47

DC residents will learn the skills to fill local jobs
pg. 49

Residents will shop in their own neighborhoods
pg. 51

Tourists will explore beyond the National Mall
pg. 53

New job centers will provide jobs and help DC remain competitive
pg. 55

Current Employment Areas

Future Employment Areas

Specialty Schools

Our city center will continue to diversify and thrive
pg. 57

THE THIRD CHALLENGE:

Connecting the Whole City

IN OUR CITY TOMORROW...

There will be more places of common ground for all DC residents
pg. 61

More residents will enjoy walking and bicycling in our city
pg. 63

Public transportation will provide long-needed connections and relieve congestion on our roads
pg. 65

Boulevards across the city will be transformed
pg. 67

The Fort Circle Parks and Anacostia waterfront will become "green necklaces" of open space
pg. 69

Federal and local interests will both be satisfied
pg. 71

Jurisdictions will work together to address regional issues while keeping DC the strong center
pg. 73



Fort Circle Greenway and Civil War Historic Forts

Transformed Boulevards

New Light Rail Lines

Looking Forward to an Inclusive DC

Shaped by and for Washingtonians, this vision will help improve our city by strengthening and growing our:



POPULATION, by keeping longtime residents here while attracting 100,000 new people to our neighborhoods.



INCOMES, because we provide access to good jobs.



SCHOOLS, to give all our children a good education.



NEIGHBORHOODS, to make them places where people are able to shop, work, play, and live.



TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, which connect community to community.



NATURAL SETTINGS, to create a greener, healthier environment for all of us.

A Real Plan Requires Real Choices

Growing inclusively will require tough choices and trade-offs. It means we must:

INCREASE density around our Metro stations and along key boulevards.

USE federal land to develop vibrant mixed income communities instead of just offices and institutions.

ACCOMMODATE more affordable housing in areas with higher-priced homes and more market rate housing in areas with lower-priced homes.

OPEN UP government-owned land in Northeast DC for public use and divert more public resources to improving neglected parks.

FOCUS government and private investment in emerging neighborhoods and neighborhood centers rather than spending evenly across the city.

SHARE the responsibility to house people with special needs in all neighborhoods.

ALLOW families to choose between public, private, or charter schools without taking funds away from our public schools.

CONSOLIDATE multiple uses such as libraries, schools, and recreation centers into single buildings, closing redundant facilities and creating public/private partnerships to refurbish community facilities.

CREATE high school curricula, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs that give our youth the skills needed to find jobs in DC.

SUPPORT efforts to bring small businesses, national chains, and other retailers to our neighborhoods—and to help tourists discover and enjoy the city beyond the monuments and museums.

EXPAND employment beyond Downtown, creating a new jobs corridor through the heart of our city.

MAKE Downtown more than just an office center by adding housing, entertainment, shopping, and other uses.

SHIFT transportation funds from our road network to our public transit systems, sidewalks, and bicycle routes.

LEVERAGE private investment along the Anacostia River and the Fort Circle Parks to improve access to open space and greenways.

MARYLAND

VIRGINIA

A Framework for the Future

The map below shows how we can address the three challenges identified in this Vision through our land use and transportation decisions.

The map illustrates specific strategies that will be necessary to create successful neighborhoods across the city. It shows the general locations of the institutions, job centers, and shopping areas that will help us increase access to education and jobs. Finally, it shows the boulevards, open spaces, and infrastructure that will play an important role in connecting the city.

MARYLAND

DC AT A GLANCE

Area:	61 square miles (land) 7 square miles (water)
Population:	575,000
Households:	255,000
Average Household Size:	2.25 persons
Density:	9,426 people per square mile
Jobs:	679,000



Creating Successful Neighborhoods

- Neighborhoods across the city
- Transit oriented development areas
- New mixed income neighborhoods

Increasing Access to Education and Employment

- Government and institutional areas
- Major employment centers
- Retail shopping and service centers
- Walkable shopping streets

Connecting the Whole City

- Major boulevards
- Highways
- Greenways and open spaces
- Water