

Mid City Area Element

Recommendations

After careful review and consideration, ANC1A ***Recommends*** that language be added to the Mid-City Area Element to address the following issues:

- **Preservation of Warehouses**

ANC1A strongly recommends that language be added as both a policy and an action to protect preserve, and adaptively repurpose when needed, large warehouse properties along the rail lines in the easternmost section of Mid-City. warehouses that come to mind include the National Geographic warehouse, the Stone Straw building, the Sanitary Grocery warehouse, and the Woodward and Lothrop warehouse. Even smaller warehouses such as the one at 336 Randolph Street, NE, are important to preserve. Much like older apartment buildings, these older warehouses have the potential of supporting a diversity of activities and uses beneficial to the districts business, arts, and housing goals in a much more cost-effective manner than could be achieved with newer construction. Additionally, these buildings are often larger than the structures in abutting residential areas, making them ideally suited for a mix of uses that is not otherwise achievable elsewhere without changing the area's current zoning – which is often met with opposition when undertaken.

- **Action MC-1.2.C: Recreation Center**

Regarding this action item, we are of the opinion that language should be added to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to regain access to the historic Bloomingdale playground site and re-establish the section of McMillan Park where the fountain once existed. Re-installing the McMillan fountain should be a long-term goal. Additionally, the historic field house for Bloomingdale/McMillan playground still exists on the reservoir site. This goal should be pursued via a long-term land lease to reopen and restore greenspace neighborhood serving and now long denied to the surrounding community.

- **Policy MC-2.2.3: Park Capacity**

We strongly support inclusion of the language “**Continue to improve the quality of existing parkland and outdoor recreation facilities**” in this policy and recommend expanding the language further to read as: “Continue to improve and maintain the quality of existing parkland and outdoor recreation facilities.” The neighborhoods within ANC1A are underserved by parks and open spaces. Because of this, this issue has demanded a lot of our attention. It is our observation that:

- The District has fully managed parks and open spaces owned by the Federal Government but managed by the District of Columbia. While many of these parcels have use restrictions requiring that they continue to be used for public recreation purposes, this restriction does not dictate passive park space nor ban local government from making improvements such as park benches, art installations, gateway signs, or public fountains.

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The District Government needs to be more engaged with these parks and invest in neighborhood serving community improvements.

- By and large, the District government also fails to adequately maintain public parks and open spaces – such at the Columbia Heights Civic Plaza or the park at 14th and Girard streets, NW. This is unacceptable as it decreases the overall quality of life, especially for lower income families and residents living in apartment buildings. Maintaining these spaces is an issue of equity, as they are community gathering spots, support community events, farmers markets, and celebrations.
- Regarding the new Action MC-2.2.D: Crosstown Study, which merely states “Implement the recommendations of DDOT’s Crosstown Study,” we recommend that you add language that this implementation will be in collaboration with impacted ANCs. ANC1A has been working diligently with DDOT to address community concerns on issues related to the Crosstown Study, and several later phases of the study have yet to have clear conclusions or recommendations. As ANCs live among the communities they represent, they often have a clearer understanding of daily impacts of present conditions and insight into potential win/win solutions.
- ANC1A Recommends that an Action item be added as a counterpart to the language “and a district with prominent LGBTQ sites” added to Policy MC-2.3.4: Cultural Tourism. While we are excited and support of this new language, without an action recommending how to support LGBTQ cultural tourism, its inclusion will likely not result in the promotion of LGBTQ history and culture. Equitable actions would be to promote LGBTQ sites, history, and culture in similar manners as the Cultural Tourism heritage trails, the African American heritage trails, cultural markers at important sites, and even preservation of the most historically significant sites.

Concerned

After careful review and consideration, ANC1A is **Concerned** to the updated versions of the following Policies:

- **Action MC-1.1.D: Off-Street Parking**

Overall, we are concerned with the removal of the language “off-street parking facilities” from this Action item. While ANC1A does not support the construction of large-scale parking garages for the use of non-District residents, we also don’t agree that eliminating parking facilities from consideration entirely is the correct path. There are instances where small-scale underground parking facilities would benefit the community and result in fewer vehicles parked in public space. Historically, before automobiles public stables existed for resident’s horses. In the early 20th Century public and private garages began to replace stables for automobile storage. The primary problem we are confronted with today is that

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over time public space became the preferred place for residents to store private vehicles. On-street parking significantly reduces the District's ability to develop and build out a multimodal traffic network – delaying or mothballing efforts to expand protected bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes. As the District moves forward to more equitably use public space to improve transportation in a multimodal approach, we ask that “off-street parking facilities” not be removed from the conversation entirely. ANC1A is not advocating for large-scale investment in or construction of parking garages. Rather, we are advocating for every option to be on the table for consideration as we rethink use of public space and transportation priorities.

Support

After careful review of the proposed changes to the Mid-City Area Element, ANC1A ***Supports*** the following proposed Policy and Action amendments:

- **Policy MC-1.1.11: Stormwater Management for Interior Flooding AND Policy MC-1.1.12: Green Development Practices**

The Commissioner support the inclusion of these two new policies. While Bloomingdale and LeDroit Park are specifically mentioned with regards to stormwater runoff impacts, we strongly encourage efforts to address stormwater management and green development practices in the entire Mid-City area.

- **Policy MC-1.2.4a: Public Art**

We strongly support the inclusion of this policy element, particularly with efforts to use gateway signs that support neighborhood culture, art, and placemaking. We recognize that every neighborhood is different, and that diversity and culture must be celebrated. Gateway signs and art, whether at neighborhood boundaries or placed in civic plazas, help to bridge understanding between and knight together newer residents with lifelong Washingtonians.

- **Action Policy MC-2.1.2: Segmenting the Corridor Identity**

We support the changes made to this action and agree that each neighborhood along Georgia Avenue has a rich history that can and should be celebrated. We also strongly support the sections that have been identified for each neighborhood.

- **Policy MC-2.1.5: Crosstown Connectivity AND Policy MC-2.1.6: Pocket Parks and Plazas**

ANC1A supports the inclusion of both of these new policies. These align with multi-year efforts of the Commission to improve transportation and preserve, improve, and expand parks and open spaces within our community.

- **Policy MC-2.2.6: Mid-14th Street Commercial District**

We strongly support the added language to this policy, and suggest OP review our recommendations for amendments to the Future Land Use Map. Those recommendations identify a few parcels where increased density would support

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the future economic development of this section of 14th Street with little negative impact on the surrounding community.

Mixed Support

After careful review of the proposed changes to the Mic-City Area Element, ANC1A offers the following comments on an amendment where ***Support is Mixed***:

- **Action MC-1.2.A: Tailored Design Guidelines**

ANC1A's support is mixed on this policy. While we are disappointed and oppose the removal of language referencing Conservation Districts, we support the inclusion of language to create design guidelines for historic neighborhoods that are not officially recognized as historic districts. If the Office of Planning is going to discard efforts to create Conservation Districts, it must do a better job of design review during the permitting review process and especially in Zoning and Board of Zoning Adjustment cases. ANC1A's experience in the past few years has been that design review by the Office of Planning still results in as much damage to the architectural fabric of century-old neighborhoods as it does good. We encourage the Office of Planning, and especially the Historic Preservation Office, to establish design guidelines for every neighborhood where the majority of buildings were constructed before 1925 **AND** that the Office of Planning adhere to those guidelines when reviewing zoning and bza cases.