# DC 2050 and Small Area Planning

## Roundtable Discussions

June 6, 2026

District of Columbia Office of Planning

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR




ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 26-RE
EXHIBIT NO. 12A

# Objectives

1. Overview of DC 2050

2. Describe connection between DC 2050 and small area plans.

3. Introduce opportunity for a more intentional small area planning approach

4. Group Discussion

# What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A comprehensive plan (comp plan) outlines a community's **long-range vision** and roadmap for growth and development.
- It guides where and how we build new housing, grow job opportunities, connect neighborhoods, preserve our rich history, and invest in public amenities.
- It includes **policies and priorities** for land, which guide the use, density, and form of buildings within the District, directly shaping the city as it changes and develops in the future.

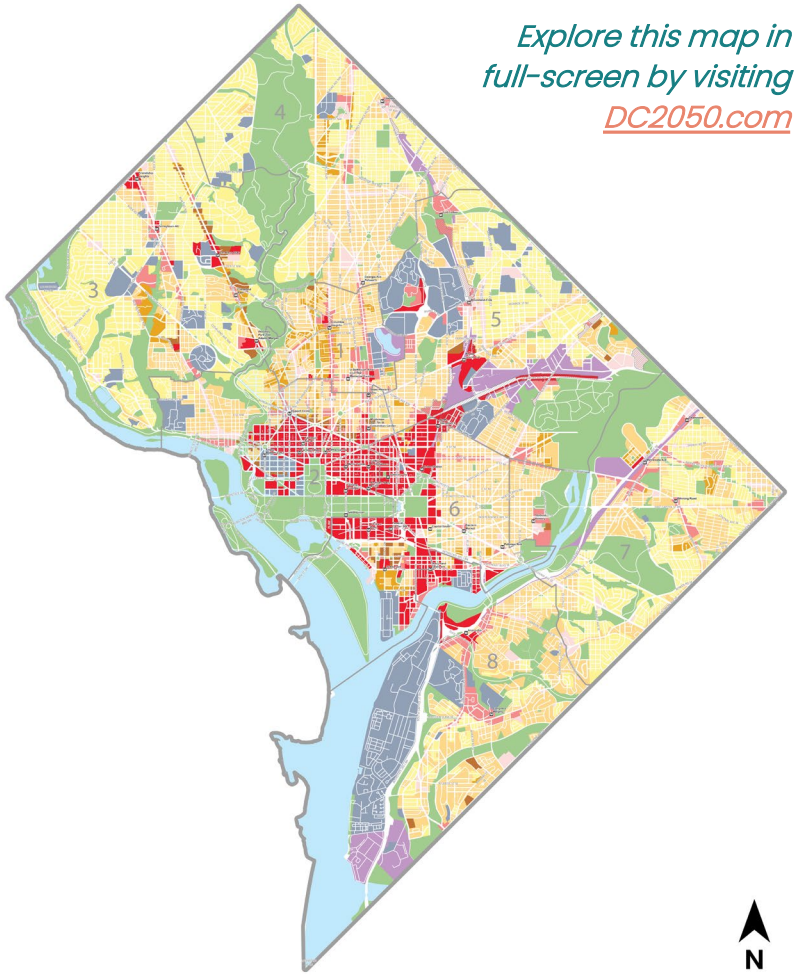


Focus Group with The Coalition, 6/26

# Draft DC 2050 Future Land Use Map

| Group | Place Types |
|---|---|
| Residential | Small-Scale Residential Neighborhood |
| | Moderate-Scale Residential Neighborhood |
| | Medium-Scale Residential Neighborhood |
| | Large-Scale Residential Neighborhood |
| Mixed Uses | Neighborhood Center |
| | Urban Center |
| | Regional Center |
| Other | Industrial |
| | Institutional |
| | Parks Recreation and Open Space |

*Explore this map in full-screen by visiting DC2050.com*

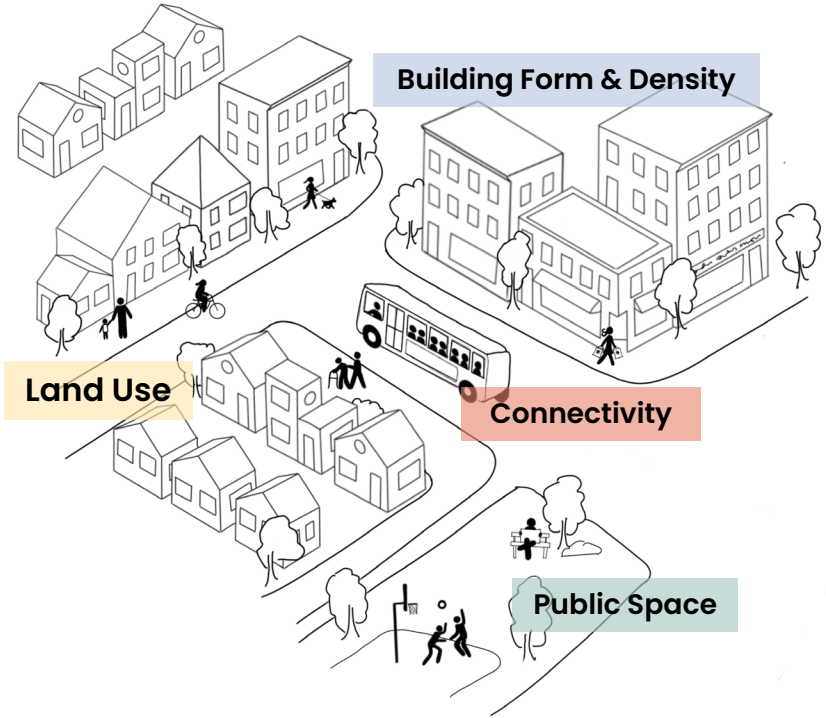


# What are “Place Types”?

**Place types** are an updated approach to land use policy to make it easier to understand how a property can be used.

Each place type includes policy guidance for a range of topics including use, building form, street connectivity, and public spaces.

The **future land use map** for DC 2050 will be developed using **place types**.



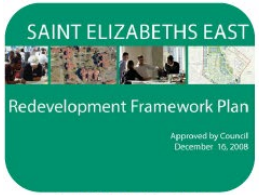

*<<< Scan the QR code to learn more about the DC 2050 place types.*

# What are “Small Area Plans”?

**Small Area Plans** are policy documents that establish a long-range, community-guided vision for thriving and inclusive communities. They identify policies, actionable strategies, and programs to meet community needs for housing, jobs, civic services, and amenities as neighborhoods continue to evolve and change. Small area plans are implemented over time through District agencies, community partners, and the private sector.

Since 2002, there have been 30 Council-adopted small area plans covering approximately 15% of the District.

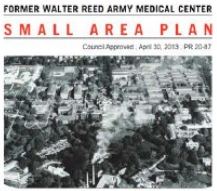
Examples include:



Saint Elizabeths East Redevelopment Framework
2008



Bellevue Small Area Plan
2010



Walter Reed Small Area Plan
2013



Mid-City East Small Area Plan
2014



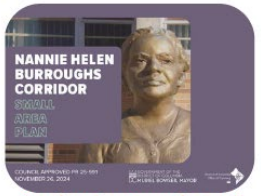
Chevy Chase Small Area Plan
2022



Congress Heights Small Area Plan
2022



Ivy City Small Area Plan
2024



Nannie Helen Burroughs Small Area Plan
2024

# What is the Connection between DC 2050 and Small Area Plans?

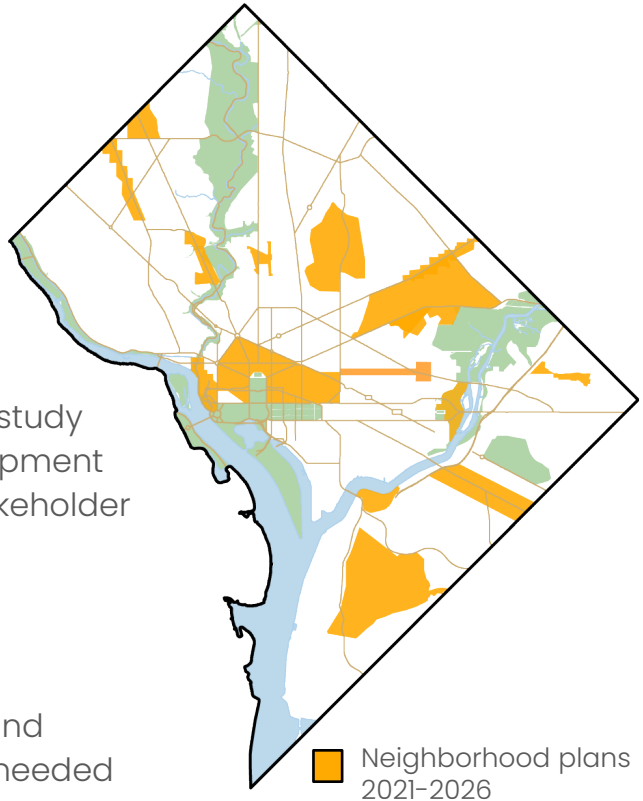
**Small Area Plans** are an important tool for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. They advance community priorities for land use and economic development activity, public realm improvements, and neighborhood amenities.

**Existing Conditions Analysis**
Identifies demographic and neighborhood conditions, community strengths, and areas of improvement.

**Vision**
Establishes the goals for the study area and community development improvements based on stakeholder input.

**Specialized Studies**
Include detailed analysis to inform recommendations for topics like economic development, zoning, and streetscape guidelines.

**Recommendations and Implementation Strategy**
Detail specific action items and resources and partnerships needed to achieve the goals of the plan.



# Rethinking Our SAP Approach As Part of DC 2050

Currently, small area plans are developed inconsistently, with varying scopes, processes, and boundaries. **Many existing plans are 15–20 years old, leaving significant portions of the District without up-to-date community planning guidance.** Components of small area plans include:

The Office of Planning is exploring ways to **make small area planning more equitable and predictable in the future,** to cover more parts of the city.

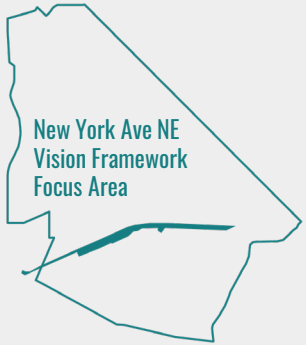
As part of DC 2050, **OP is looking at establishing small area plan boundaries** that group neighborhoods together to cover larger areas

## Place-Based Plans

Provide specific policy guidance at the neighborhood-level.

Upper Northeast Area Element existing approach




### Small Area Plans

Provide supplemental guidance to the Zoning Commission and other District agencies in carrying out the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Passed by DC Council.

### Other Place-Based Plans

Master plans, development frameworks, and design guidelines are a few examples of place-specific plans that achieve different objectives.

# Roundtable Discussion

# Discussion Questions

1. *Based on your recent experience, what aspects of the small area planning process worked well for your ANC and what felt challenging?*

2. *What types of plan recommendations are most impactful for ANCs (e.g. zoning changes, streetscape or building design guidelines, economic development)? What recommendations are missing or need to be strengthened?*

3. *When planning for larger geographies, what are some considerations to ensure that small area plans still reflect unique neighborhood needs?*

4. *How can small area plans better connect to the Comp Plan? (e.g. advance comp plan targets, inform public investments, make updates to the future land use map)*