

# VISION PROCESS

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ST  
SE

November 29, 2010

Ms. Harriet Tregoning  
Director

DC Office of Planning  
1100 4th Street, SW  
Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024

**IT IS OUR PLEASURE TO SUBMIT TO YOU  
THIS COPY OF THE LOWER 8TH STREET, SE  
VISION PROCESS SUMMARY REPORT.**

As you will recall, it was at your suggestion in the summer of 2009 that we embarked on a Vision Process for the Lower 8th Street, SE area. That process has occurred in a series of five (5) public workshops over a year long period and has involved a number of community stakeholders:

- *Barracks Row Main Street*
- *Capitol Hill Restoration Society*
- *CHAMPS Chamber of Commerce*
- *ANC 6B*
- *Marine Barracks*
- *Navy Yard*
- *Residents of Capitol Hill and Capitol Riverfront*
- *Property Owners along Barracks Row*
- *Business Owners along Barracks Row*
- *Office of Planning*

The entire process was overseen by a Lower 8th Street Advisory Group that consisted of representatives from the above referenced stakeholders, residents and business in the area. That group's

membership is profiled in a later section of this document, as is the public workshop process.

The Capitol Riverfront BID took this charge to conduct a Vision Process for the Lower 8th Street area very seriously, as this sub-district of our BID has the opportunity to become a destination with a true sense of place and identity, instead of serving as just a languishing group of blocks that transition between the historic Capitol Hill neighborhood to the north and our higher density Capitol Riverfront neighborhood to the south and west. We very much appreciate the participation of all the groups above, as well as Melissa Bird, the Ward 6 Planner from your team who provided invaluable advice and guidance as she participated throughout the Vision Process.

The recommendations from the Vision Process are contained within this summary as well as the collective vision for the area – a vibrant, mixed-use destination that respects and incorporates all existing historic resources. The community has come to a general consensus that there would be further discussions of and considerations for flexibility in height and density on identified squares, when evaluated on a square by square basis. Participants also agreed that the current status quo was unacceptable and that well planned change could be welcomed in order to create destination and a sense of place.

I think all participants would agree that the greatest benefits to come from this engaging and transparent process were twofold: 1) The creation of an environment of trust between all stakeholders, the BID, and property owners, based on thorough and often robust discussions in the public workshops; and 2) A greater willingness by property owners to invest in the Lower 8th Street neighborhood through high quality projects based on this trust and vision established by all participants.

I want to thank you for your leadership and foresight in establishing this Vision Process for Lower 8th Street, SE. I believe that the process serves as an instructive example for community collaboration that achieves an outcome that all stakeholders can support and help achieve.

I would be glad to brief you and your team on the findings of the Lower 8th Street Vision Process once you have had a chance to review the summary report document.

Sincerely,



**Michael Stevens, AICP**

Executive Director  
Capitol Riverfront BID

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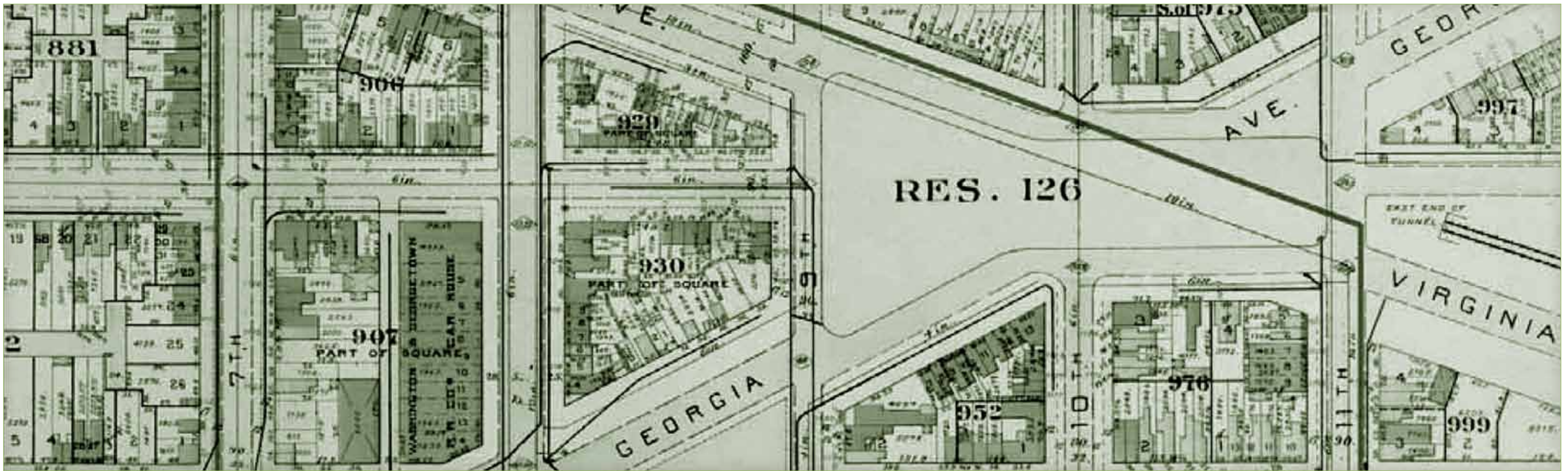
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# VISION PROCESS





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# INTRODUCTION

**IN OCTOBER OF 2009, THE CAPITOL RIVERFRONT BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CRBID) EMBARKED ON A “VISION PROCESS” FOR AN AREA OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED THE LOWER 8TH STREET, SE SUB-DISTRICT (LOWER BARRACKS ROW).**

This process was undertaken at the suggestion of the DC Office of Planning, after the CRBID and its Lower 8th Street property owners expressed interest in analyzing the area and its potential for redevelopment. Several future form determinants could provide catalytic impetus for new projects in the area, and the BID and property owners wanted to position for this potential new growth.

The DC Office of Planning suggested that a transparent and inclusive “Vision Process” should be conducted for the area and involve the surrounding community, organizational stakeholders, local businesses and property owners, in order to achieve a collective vision for any new growth and development proposals. Working with the Office of Planning and numerous stakeholder groups, a Lower 8th Street Advisory Group was established to work with the CRBID and oversee this vision exercise and consensus building process that would unfold through a series of community workshops.

This community workshop process and the composition of the Lower 8th Street Advisory Group

will be discussed in following sections, as will the schedule of community meetings and logistics of the process.

This area of Lower 8th Street, SE is also a part of the Barracks Row Main Street, a highly successful restaurant and retail corridor that is affiliated with the National Main Street program. The CRBID invited BRMS to be our partners in the Lower 8th Street Vision Process and help facilitate outreach to the surrounding community.



# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



**THE LOWER 8TH STREET AREA IS UNIQUELY SITUATED BETWEEN THE HISTORIC CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE NORTH AND THE RAPIDLY GROWING, HIGH DENSITY CAPITOL RIVERFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE SOUTH AND WEST THAT ALSO INCLUDES THE NAVY YARD CAMPUS AND THE NATIONALS BASEBALL STADIUM.**

This geography suggests that Lower 8th Street could serve as a link or connection between the two neighborhoods, and benefit from that proximity to the two areas as well. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic heading south on 8th Street, SE is forced to either turn right to the Capitol Riverfront at M Street, SE, or left to continue on to the Anacostia neighborhood via the 11th Street Bridge, as 8th Street, SE terminates at the historic Latrobe Gates of the Navy Yard campus.



This proximity to the Capitol Hill neighborhood, the upper Barracks Row Main Street restaurant row, the employment population of the Navy Yard campus, and the growing residential and employment base of the Capitol Riverfront should logically ensure success of this area. However, this has not been the case. The area has languished and not experienced the same level of economic



development activity as Barracks Row north of the SE/SW freeway and the Capitol Riverfront. It exhibits no destination qualities or sense of place, lacks a cohesive retail mix, and has little or no office and minimal office and residential uses in place today.

The study area should be more than a “pass-through” for traffic and pedestrians going to either the Capitol Hill or Capitol Riverfront neighborhoods—it should be a vital destination in and of itself that builds upon existing historic resources and proximity to these other neighborhoods, employment centers and entertainment districts. As a destination, it can also strengthen the connection between Barracks Row Main Street and the Capitol Riverfront.

Another consideration was the context that almost the entire Capitol Riverfront had been master planned and zoned by the Office of Planning and the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation. The study area had never really been analyzed and planned as a part of that master planning process and therefore had no overarching vision or vision for future development. A final consideration was the introduction of a 45’ height overlay that had been placed upon the area in 1999 as a response to the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1995.

The 1999 Eighth Street (ES) Overlay established the 45’ height limit as a way to protect the existing historic building inventory from possible new growth as a result of the BRAC decision to locate the Naval Sea Operations (NAVSEA) from northern VA to the historic Navy Yard campus. Some community stakeholders and property owners felt that the height limit had served to preserve the historic buildings but had also thwarted any new economic development initiatives.

Vision Process participants all saw the need for positive change and the ability to capitalize on a number of emerging form determinants that could bring economic development to the study area:

- The possible location of new **Marine barracks** facilities and support uses in the area.
- The possible addition of up to 4,000 new employees at the **Navy Yard campus** (to be housed in offices outside the campus walls—approximately 800,000 square feet of new office space).
- The possible re-construction of the **CSX Railroad** VA Avenue tunnel.
- The implementation of a new **street car line** on M Street, SE.





# THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

**THE VISION PROCESS FOR LOWER 8TH STREET POSED A KEY QUESTION TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS ON THE AREA – “WHAT IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE?” FOR THIS SUB-DISTRICT.**

Many participants saw potential in the area, but only used it as a “pass through” or connection from Capitol Hill to the Capitol Riverfront, the Navy Yard and the new Nationals Park. Everyone was asked to envision what the neighborhood could be within the context of historic preservation if economic development activity and projects could be attracted to the study area.





# PHYSICAL CONTEXT

## THE STUDY AREA CONSISTS OF SIX (6) SQUARES AND IS BOUNDED BY THE FOLLOWING STREETS:

- 7th Street, SE to the west
- The SE/SW freeway to the north
- 11th Street, SE to the east
- M Street, SE to the south

One of the Squares contains the approximate 2-acre Virginia Avenue Park that is owned by the National Park Service and maintained by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation.

Roadways that traverse the area include 7th Street, 8th Street, 9th Street, 10th Street, 11th Street,

Virginia Avenue and the SE/SW freeway frontage roads, L Street, Potomac Avenue, and M Street.

A number of significant historic structures populate the study area with the Car Barn and annex (Blue Castle) at M Street and 8th Street being the largest of that inventory. This cluster of significant historic structures led to the area being included in the National Register of Historic Places designation of Capitol Hill as a historic district.

## ZONING OVERLAYS IN THE AREA ARE AS FOLLOWS:

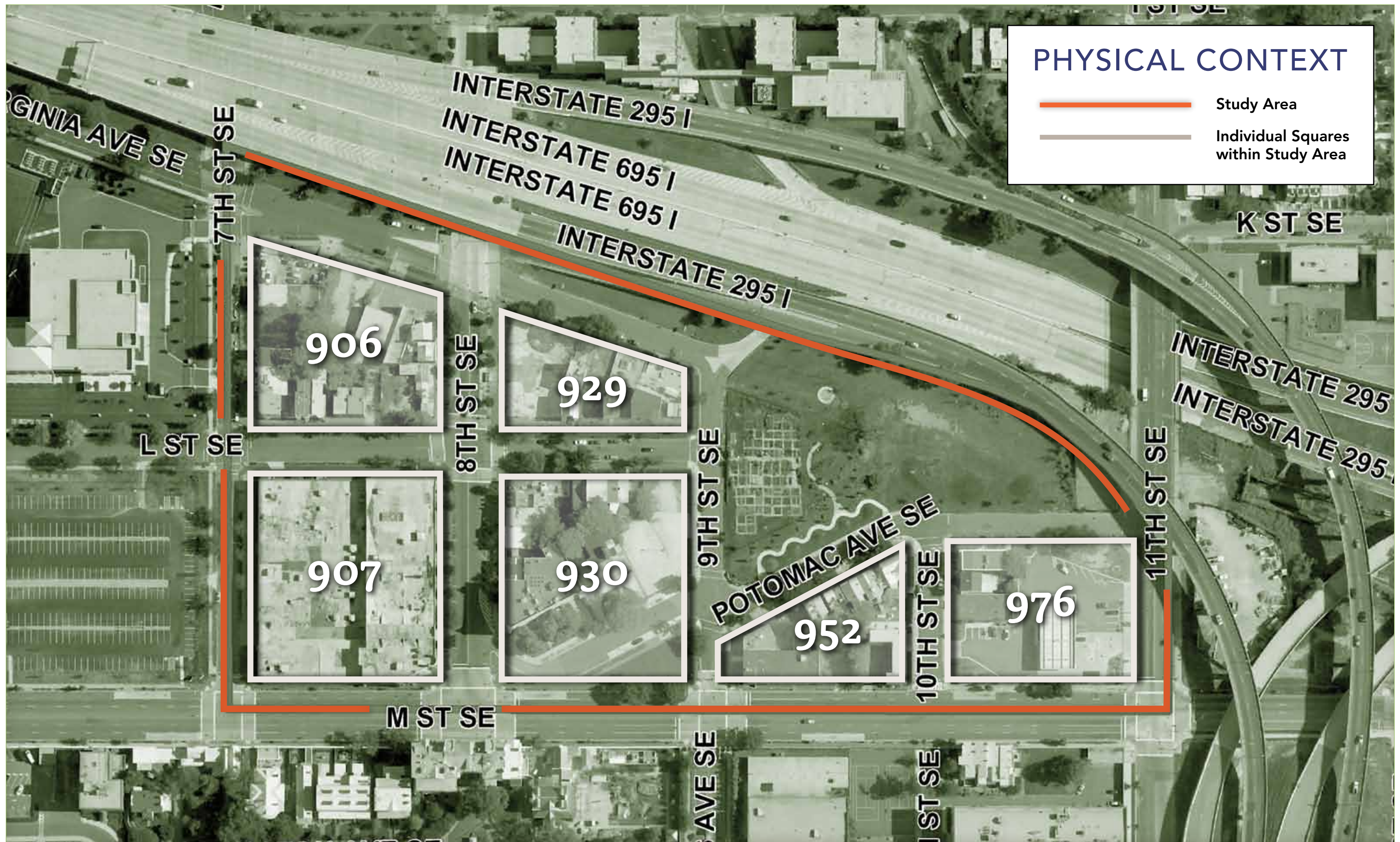
- **C-3-A** (FAR max: 4.0; max. height max of 65 ft.; matter of right for residential, retail & office; residential can be 75% of lot maximum)

- **C-M-1** (FAR max: 3.0; height max of 40 ft.; matter of right for commercial & industrial uses; new residential prohibited)

- The aforementioned **ES Overlay** (height max of 45 ft.; regulations for type and amount of restaurant sq. ft.)

The study area has a variety of land uses including charter schools, 3 restaurants, a beauty/barber shop, small offices, a corner market, single family townhouses, Virginia Avenue Park, and an auto repair shop.

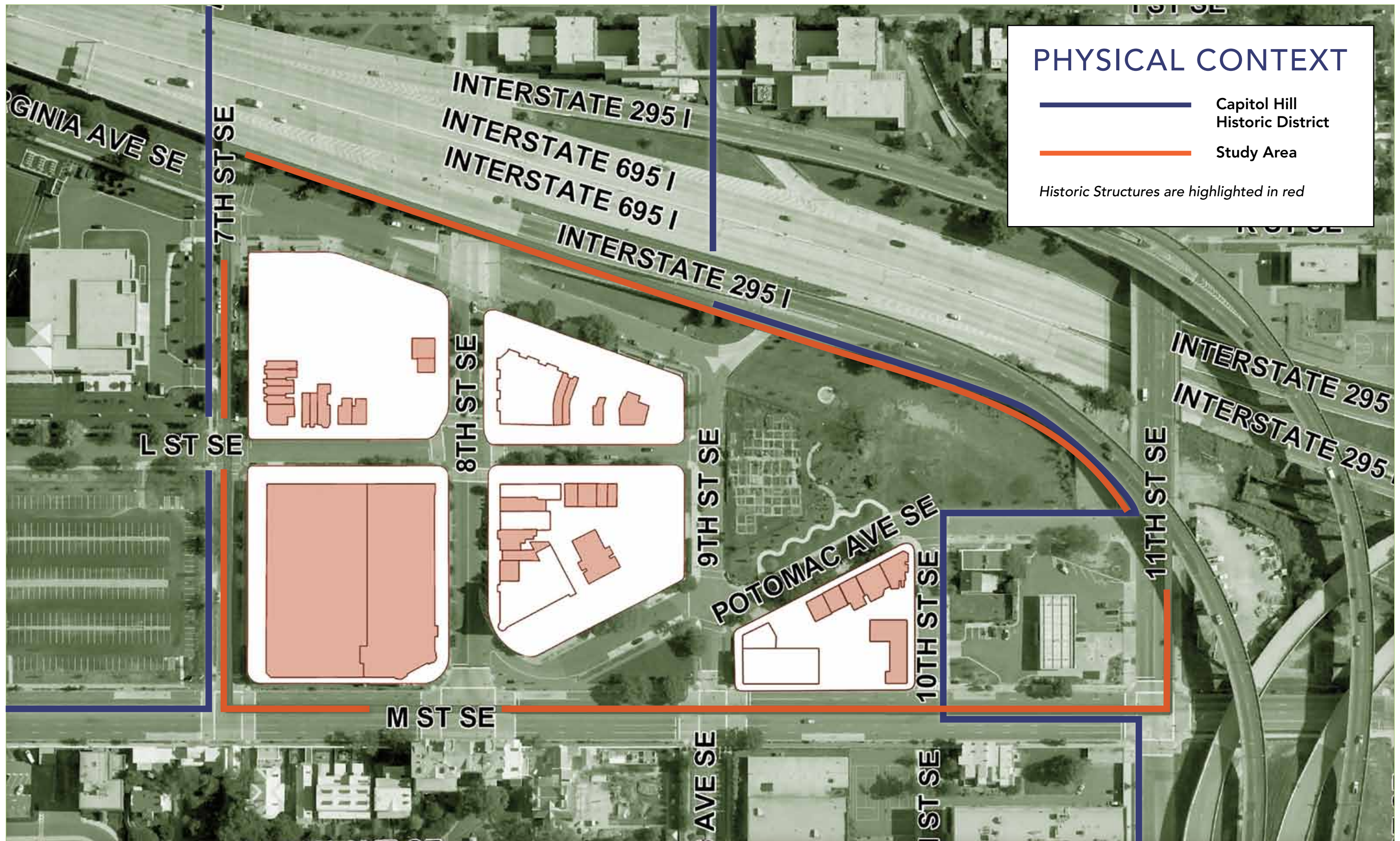




## PHYSICAL CONTEXT

- Study Area
- Individual Squares within Study Area





## PHYSICAL CONTEXT

- Capitol Hill Historic District
- Study Area

*Historic Structures are highlighted in red*





# ISSUES/IMPEDIMENTS OF THE STUDY AREA

Vision Process participants were asked to examine and discuss issues/impediments that currently impact the study area in a negative way.

## THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THOSE ISSUE DISCUSSIONS:

- The study area does not exhibit continuous block faces or street facades due to **gaps in the urban fabric** created by vacant lots and surface parking lots.
- The study area is physically **separated from upper 8th Street** by the SE/SW Freeway and is not connected to the Anacostia River to the south.
- The pedestrian experience **is not inviting** and the passageway beneath the freeway feels unsafe and poorly illuminated—the walking experience adjacent to the VA Avenue frontage roads is unpleasant.
- The study area has **not experienced** the level of economic development exhibited by upper Bar-racks Row and the Capitol Riverfront.
- The area feels **isolated and cut-off** from other neighborhoods and the access to VA Avenue Park is not pedestrian friendly.
- Many of the area's buildings are **vacant or underutilized**.
- The existing land uses **do not reflect** the desires of the community.
- Future form determinants could have **negative impacts** on the area.

CONNECTING POINT ★ SENSE OF PLACE  
RESPECTS  
HISTORIC STRUCTURES ★ VIBRANCY  
DESTINATION ★ WALKABLE URBANITY

## VISION FOR THE AREA: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**PARTICIPANTS ENVISIONED A VIBRANT SUB-DISTRICT WITH A MIX OF USES WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE, WORK, SHOP AND DINE; AN AREA WITH ITS OWN DESTINATION QUALITIES AND CHARACTER WHERE PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO LINGER AND EXPERIENCE THE AREA; AND AN EXCITING URBAN CONNECTION TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS TO THE NORTH AND SOUTHWEST.**

Several principles were discussed that could guide the transformation to achieve a vision for Lower 8th Street, SE:

- **Establish** a sense of place and destination that builds upon existing historic buildings, thereby creating a walkable urbanity.
- **Encourage** compatible new development that respects historic structures and would lead to their renovation for new uses.
- **Make** the area more than a transition zone or connection between two neighborhoods.

- **Extend** the vibrancy of the Barracks Row restaurant district south of the freeway, but layer in other neighborhood scale retail uses that support the community.
- **Add** land uses that will bring additional users to the area—residential, hotel, and office.

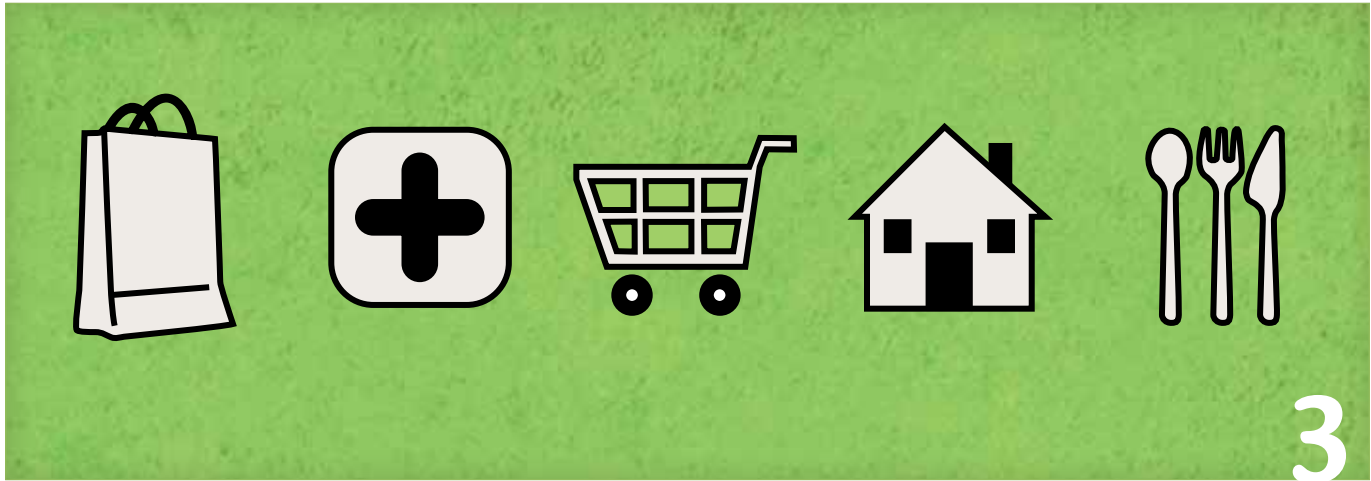
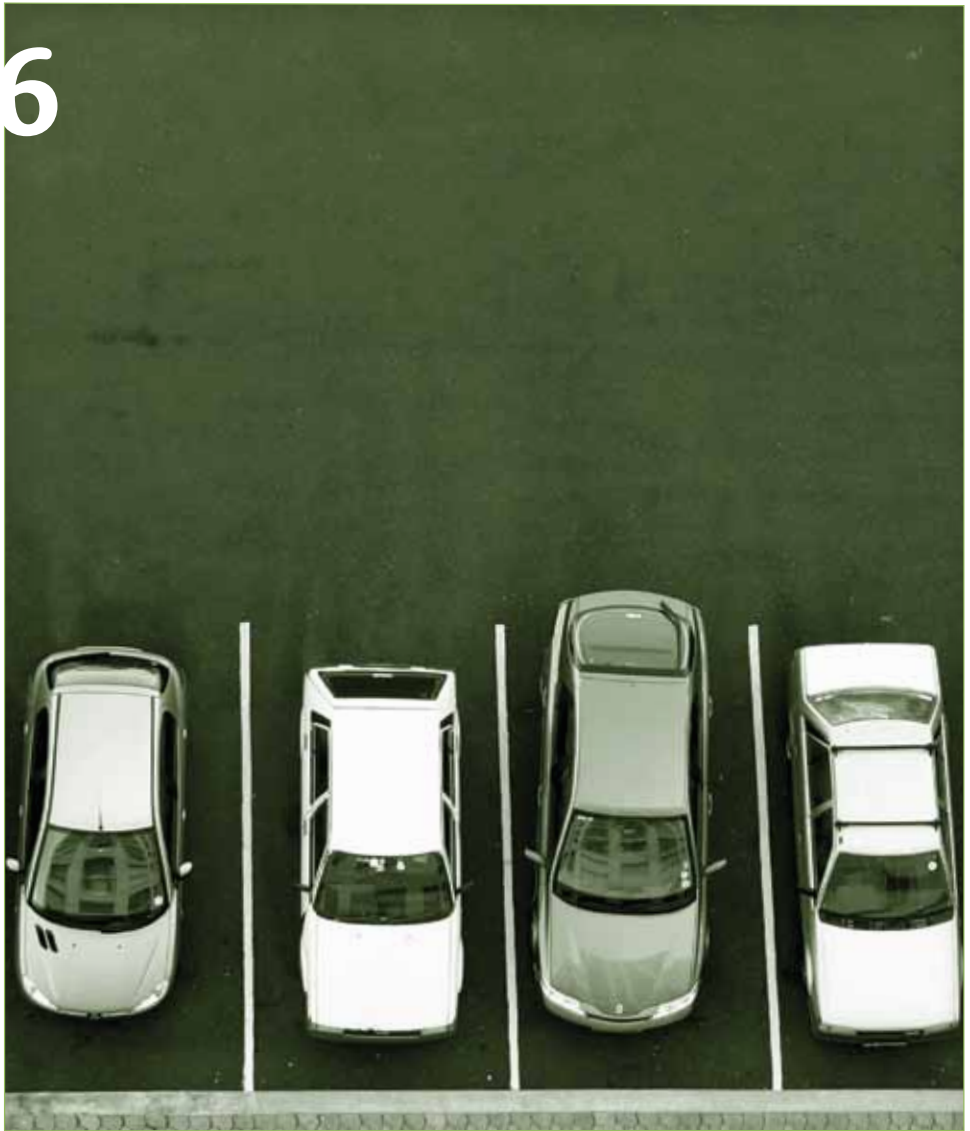


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# RECOMMENDATIONS

*The following is a summary of recommendations that have emerged from the Lower 8th Street, SE Vision Process that was conducted over a six month process by the Capitol Riverfront BID in collaboration with the Barracks Row Main Street.*







# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. The Status Quo is Unacceptable

All parties agreed that the current state of affairs is unacceptable and change must be encouraged and would be welcomed. The Navy Yard expansion and the Marine Corps CIMP process could be economic drivers for the study area and provide a much needed impetus for redevelopment efforts. While the area has a number of significant historic buildings, it is also characterized by vacant parcels and surface parking lots that create gaps in the urban fabric. There are also several vacant or underutilized buildings that can be re-purposed with higher and better uses.

## 2. Historic Preservation is a Must

All parties agreed that existing identified historic buildings should be preserved and maintained as a part of the neighborhood’s revitalization. This could involve establishing appropriate set-backs along 8th Street and other street corridors to preserve buildings with sufficient depth of structures for new uses.

## 3. Encourage a Mix of Uses

All participants wanted to see a vibrant mix of uses in the study area that would increase the activity cycle and bring more users to the sub-district while creating a sense of place and destination.

Preferred uses that were discussed included:

<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Residential</i>
<i>Retail/Restaurants</i>	<i>Daycare Facilities</i>
<i>Meeting Facilities</i>	<i>Art &amp; Office Supply</i>
<i>Grocery Store</i>	<i>Apparel for Family</i>
<i>Office (medical offices)</i>	<i>Electronics Store</i>
<i>Athletic Store</i>	<i>Specialty Retail*</i>

*\* The category of specialty retail included a flower shop, card shop, specialty cheeses, a bakery, an independent book store, a coffee shop, etc.*

## 4. Improve the 8th Street/I-395 Underpass

The 8th Street underpass needs significant enhancements in order to serve as a safe transition and connection from the upper Barracks Row/Capitol Hill neighborhood to the Lower 8th Street, SE/Capitol Riverfront neighborhood. Improvements could include better lighting; using light as art and sculpture; the installation

of retail storefronts; mural art installations on the freeway walls and facades (being done by BRMS on east façade); better pedestrian connections and lighting on the north and south side of the freeway across the Virginia Avenue frontage roads; etc.

## 5. Rebuild/Maintain Virginia Avenue Park

The existing VA Avenue Park is an underutilized and poorly designed/maintained resource for the community. It could be redesigned to reflect numerous user opportunities and also be maintained at a much higher level. The existing community gardens should be maintained with possible new uses including a children’s garden, dog park area, picnic areas, children’s play areas, etc. This would involve a total redesign and reconstruction of the park and could be accomplished and funded as part of the CSX VA Avenue tunnel rebuild project.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6. Address Parking & Circulation Issues

It is recommended that the Office of Planning, in conjunction with the District's Department of Transportation (DDOT), examine all parking and circulation patterns to see if there are any improvements to be made to the existing street grid and to on-street parking.

Issues that exist include:

- One-way streets that are **confusing** to users, especially on the west side of the study area
- **Insufficient parking** for existing and future land uses
- **Identification** of future loading zones, underground parking access, and off-street loading dock access
- **Circulation patterns** at the intersection of 8th Street and M Street, SE
- The **impacts** of and resulting circulation patterns from the 11th Street bridge construction project

## 7. The Car Barn as a Destination Retail Center

The existing historic Car Barn should be the centerpiece of the area's retail efforts and be renovated/re-purposed as a destination

retail center with new uses desired by the community. Additional height/density should be considered above the annex building adjacent to the original Car Barn structure. The additional density and height would allow for possible office or residential uses that could support new retail in the Car Barn and surrounding structures.

## 8. Possible Flexibility in Height & Density

We are not recommending any particular height or density formula for the area, nor a blanket rezoning or removal of the ES Overlay or the historic district overlay; but there was consensus that the community could consider height and density flexibility on the four recommended squares and that meritorious projects would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the community. However, participants came to a fundamental agreement to consider meritorious projects on a case-by-case basis for additional height and density. There was agreement that density and height flexibility could help achieve the vision for Lower 8th Street, when properly planned and designed with input from the community. General consensus was achieved on several recommendations:

- A. Up to four (4) squares could possibly accommodate **additional height and density**—the Miles Glass site (SQ 0906); the Car Barn site (SQ 0907); the Potomac Avenue site (SQ 0930); and the former Exxon site (SQ 0976).

- B. **Height flexibility** could be proposed, explored, reviewed and accepted on these four sites in the range of 65' to 85'.

- C. A **45' height limit** should be maintained along the 8th Street corridor for all new construction in order to preserve the scale of the existing structures and the view corridor. Additional height should not occur above existing historic structure along 8th Street, SE until a setback of 20 – 30 feet, and then greater height flexibility could be considered in any new construction to the rear of the historic structures.

- D. The Miles Glass site (SQ 0906) could be **developed as a hotel** with meeting facilities and a restaurant/bar with a height of 85' allowed.

Any proposed flexibility for height and density increases on the aforementioned squares would have to be reviewed and approved by the community and stakeholder organizations. Flexibility in height and density could be achieved through a Planned Unit Development (PUD) review process that would involve the Office of Planning and the community. The review would include site plans, access and parking plans, building locations and massing, proposed uses, and architectural design/elevations. Any proposed redevelopment plan would include the reuse and preservation of the historic buildings on site.



# CONCEPTUAL HEIGHT AND MASSING STUDY

**IN ORDER TO ILLUSTRATE BUILDING MASSING, HEIGHT AND DENSITY CONCEPTS ON IDENTIFIED SITES THE CAPITOL RIVERFRONT BID CONTRACTED WITH ESOCOFF & ASSOCIATES TO PREPARE A SERIES OF CONCEPTUAL HEIGHT AND MASSING STUDIES FOR THE AREA.**

Various density and height concepts were explored at 45', 65' and 85' to "test fit" the idea that new development, when well designed, could accommodate greater density while respecting, preserving and re-purposing existing historic structures to higher and better uses. Various height and density "flexibility" scenarios were presented, examined,

and explored by the community, resulting in a true discussion of the art of the possible for Lower 8th Street. In all illustrations the historic structures are shown in green.



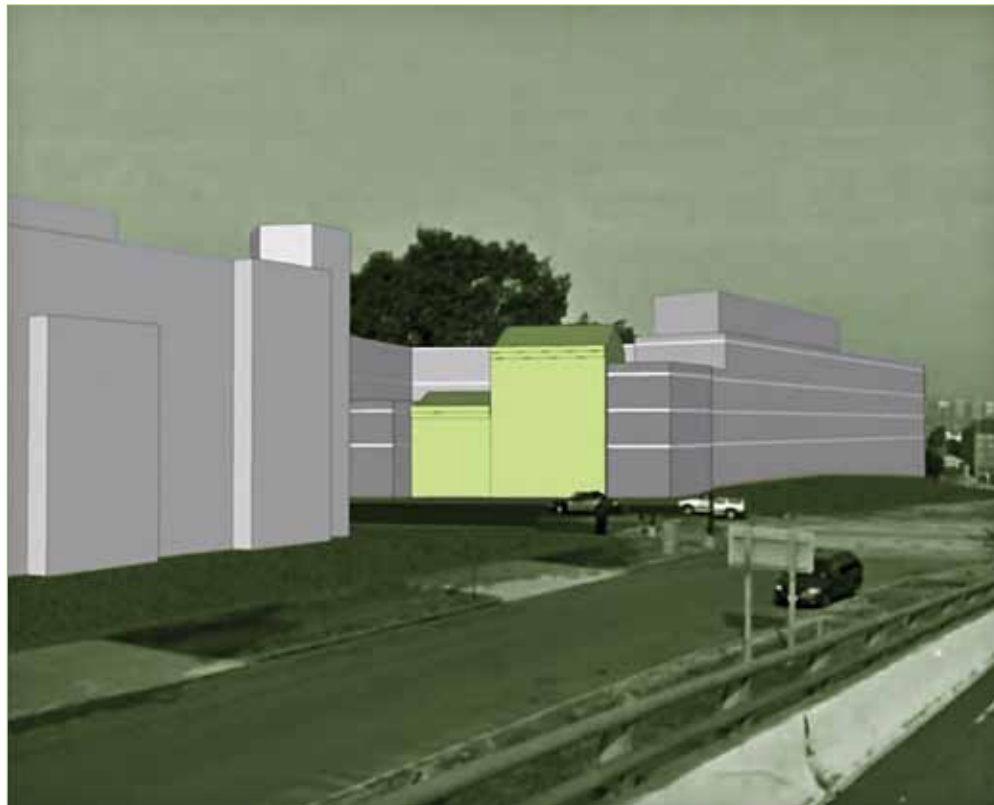
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*45 Ft. Elevation*



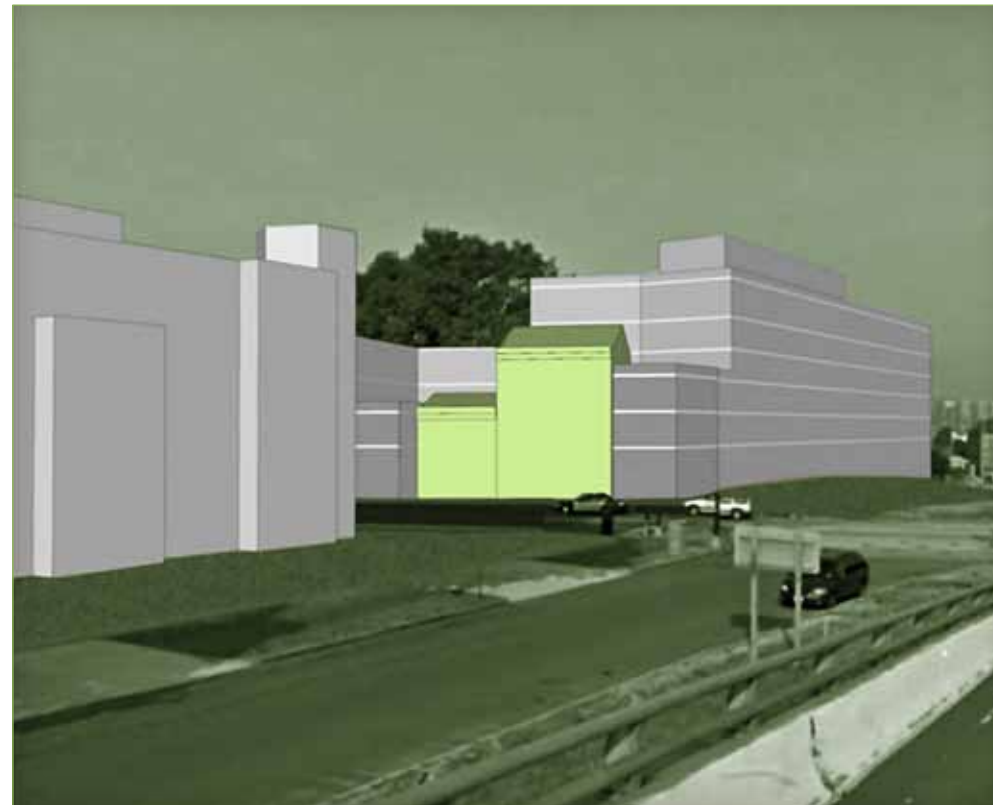
**Square 906**  
*85 Ft. Elevation*

# CONCEPTUAL HEIGHT AND MASSING STUDY

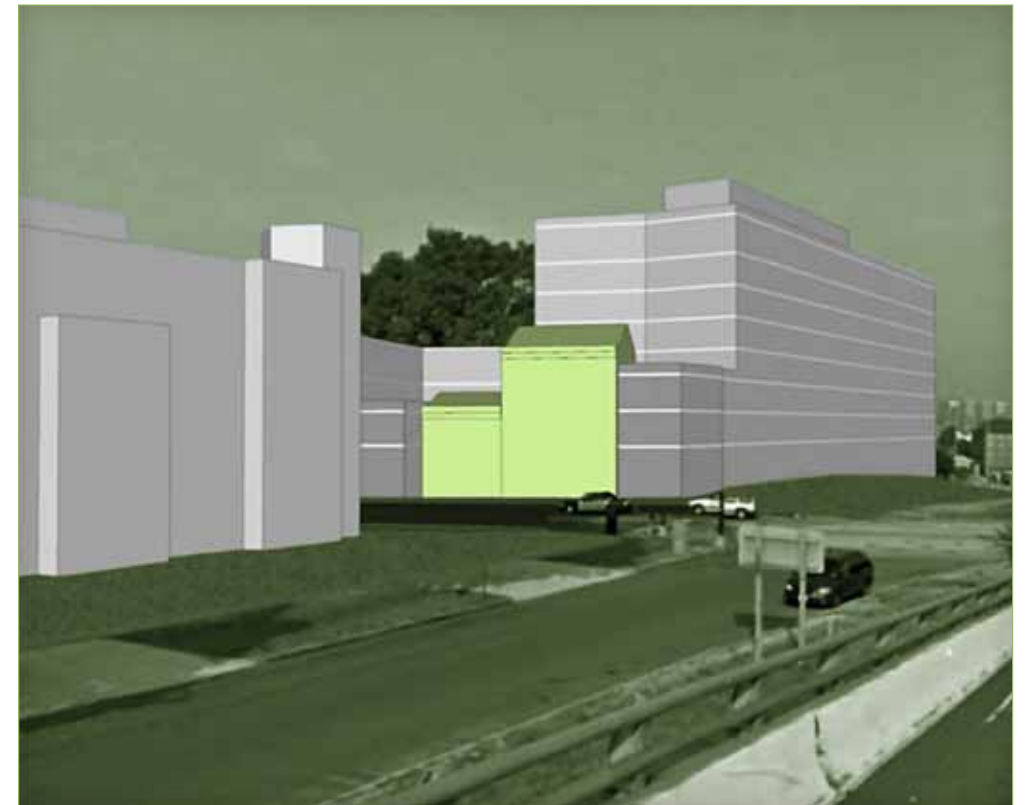
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**Square 906**  
45 Ft. Elevation



**Square 906**  
65 Ft. Elevation



**Square 906**  
85 Ft. Elevation

*This view from the SE/SW Freeway ramp looking southwest towards 8th Street, SE illustrates the possibility of height/density flexibility on the Miles Glass site with the development program respecting the historic structures fronting on 8th Street. Discussions centered on the idea of a hotel being developed on this site.*



# CONCEPTUAL HEIGHT AND MASSING STUDY

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Square 907  
45 Ft. Elevation



Square 907  
65 Ft. Elevation



Square 907  
85 Ft. Elevation

*This view looking northwest from M Street towards the historic Car Barn and annex illustrates the possibility of additional height/density being developed over the Car Barn annex. The new development was envisioned as either office or residential, with the Car Barn being a destination retail center.*

# CONCEPTUAL HEIGHT AND MASSING STUDY

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Square 930  
45 Ft. Elevation



Square 930  
65 Ft. Elevation



Square 930  
85 Ft. Elevation

*This view looking northeast from M Street towards Potomac Avenue, SE illustrates the possibility of additional height/density being developed around the existing historic apartment building on Potomac Avenue, SE and behind the historic structures fronting on 8th Street, SE. The new development was envisioned as residential units overlooking Virginia Avenue Park.*



# CONCEPTUAL HEIGHT AND MASSING STUDY

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Study Area  
45 Ft. Elevation



Study Area  
65 Ft. Elevation



Study Area  
85 Ft. Elevation

*This series of bird's eye perspectives from the south of the study area looking north up 8th Street, SE illustrate the possibility of additional height/density through new development with existing historic structures being preserved (illustrated in green). The studies show that Lower 8th Street can achieve a physical form that creates destination and a sense of place—while preserving and reinforcing the existing historic fabric.*

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COMMUNITY INPUT



# COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS



People's Church

## THE VISION PROCESS FOR LOWER 8TH STREET WAS CONSTRUCTED AROUND A SERIES OF FIVE (5) COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS HELD OVER THE COURSE OF SIX (6) MONTHS.

The workshops were conducted in the People's Church located on Barracks Row Main Street at 535 8th Street, SE. Two workshops were conducted on each of the five meeting days—one at 8:30 a.m. and one at 7:00 p.m. in order to allow as many participants to attend as possible. The CRBID hired a professional facilitator to lead discussions at the community workshops—Michael Altman of Trialogue Studios. The community workshops attracted over 250 attendees during the 6 month process.

Each workshop served as a briefing and a discussion forum for participants and a variety of topics were presented to stimulate discussions:

- The **historical development** of the Lower 8th Street neighborhood in the context of Capitol Hill

- The **development dynamic** of the Capitol Riverfront
- **Existing zoning/entitlements** for the study area and what new development could be accommodated under that zoning
- **Future form determinants** for the study area that could bring change and drive development opportunities
- **Issues/impediments** of the study area
- **Opportunities** of the study area
- Project **examples** of density and mix of uses in the District and other cities
- Desired **mix of uses** for the study area and possible locations
- Possible height and density **allocations** in the study area

The CRBID also contracted with the architecture and urban design firm Esocoff & Associates to

conduct the historical research on the study area and to prepare urban design, building massing and height studies of possible height scenarios for the area at 45', 65', and 85'.

Wayne Dickson of Blake Dickson was a guest speaker for one meeting and described to participants the process of attracting the Whole Foods Grocery to P Street, NW, and gave an overview of the retail attraction process.

Richard Lake of Roadside Development also presented at one meeting to discuss increased density and mix of uses in urban projects and used two projects—the Cityline at Tenley and the O Street Market—to illustrate the application of those concepts. Both projects involved the reuse and incorporation of historic structures in larger scale, mixed use projects that included retail and residential as primary uses.

All workshop presentations are posted on the website for the Vision Process for public review at [www.lower8th.blogspot.com](http://www.lower8th.blogspot.com).



**CHARLES ALLEN** ★ **MELISSA BIRD** ★ **DAVID BRAINERD** ★ **JULIA CHRISTIAN**  
WARD 6 COUNCILMEMBER WELLS OFFICE OF PLANNING (EX OFFICIO) MADISON MARQUETTE CHAMPS - CAPITOL HILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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**TED SKIRBUNT** ★ **MICHAEL STEVENS** ★ **DAVID ZAPPONI**  
CAPITOL RIVERFRONT BID CAPITOL RIVERFRONT BID MADISON MARQUETTE

## LOWER 8TH STREET ADVISORY GROUP (AG)

The Vision Process for Lower 8th Street was overseen by a community advisory group that met throughout the process, provided feedback to the Capitol Riverfront BID, helped generate attendance for the community workshops, and interfaced with various constituencies to solicit input on the process and recommendations.

The Advisory Group also met before and after each community workshop to help set the agenda for each meeting and then debrief/discuss the community input.

A full listing of the Advisory Group members can be found at the website [www.lower8th.blogspot.com](http://www.lower8th.blogspot.com).





## LOWER 8TH STREET WEBSITE & BLOG

As an additional way to communicate with the community and inform them of the process and its progress, the Capitol Riverfront BID established a website for the Vision Process that also included a community blog.

All workshop presentations and minutes of the meetings were posted to the website for review and comment. The community was invited to post their input on the process via the blog.

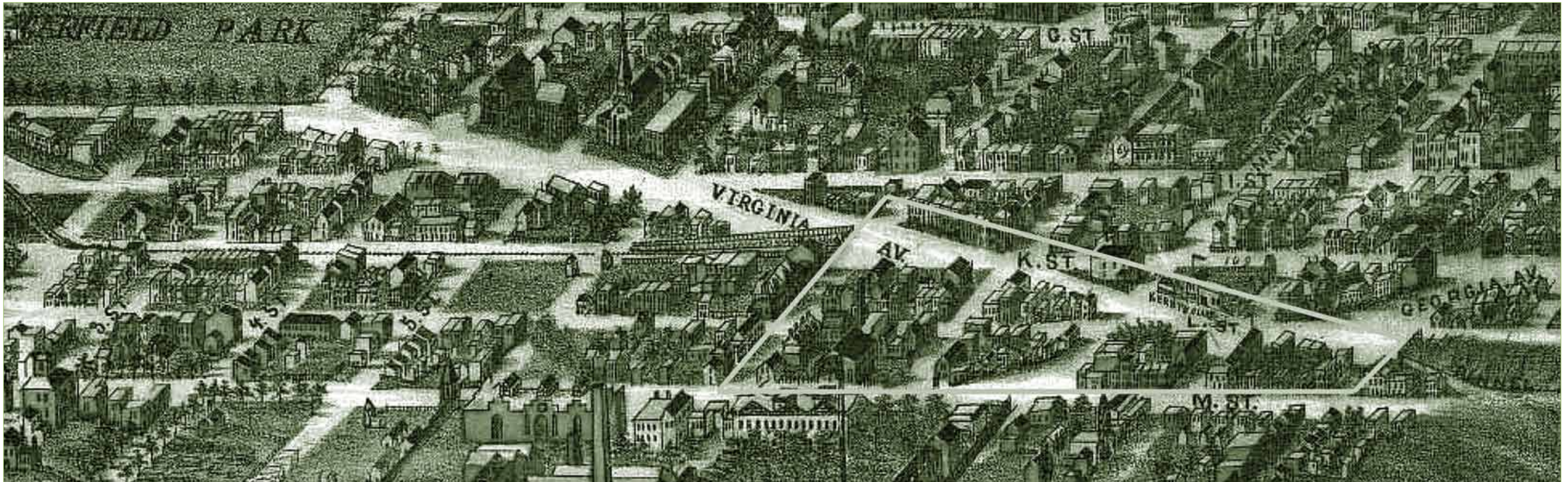
Visit [www.lower8th.blogspot.com](http://www.lower8th.blogspot.com) to review all presentations, minutes to meetings and community responses.



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# CONCLUSION





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# CONCLUSION

## THE LOWER 8TH STREET VISION PROCESS INITIATED A DIALOGUE AMONG VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS IN THIS OFTEN OVERLOOKED AREA OF THE CAPITOL RIVERFRONT BID AND THE BARRACKS ROW MAIN STREET.

Over the course of six (6) months we had open discussions with property owners, preservationists, merchants and business owners, residents of Capitol Hill and the Capitol Riverfront, stakeholder organizations, ANC representatives, and agencies of the DC Government.

The five (5) community workshops illustrated that while there was some initial disagreement over the type, density and height of future development along Lower 8th Street, there was a common ground achieved regarding a number of key points:

- That existing conditions, or the “status quo” were **unacceptable** and needed to be improved.
- That change could be welcomed and new development could contribute to a **positive future** for the area, providing that new development was well designed and preserved existing historic structures.

- That Lower 8th Street could become a destination with a sense of place, and be a **vibrant sub-district** with a mix of uses and activities that supported the needs of the surrounding community.
- That the existing historic structures were an important part of the **character** and future sense of place of Lower 8th Street.

Once these points of agreement were established, the discussions then focused on a common vision for the area and how do we achieve that vision—the art of the possible. Examples of the best in mixed-use projects from other successful



neighborhoods in DC and across the country were presented and discussed. Future economic development drivers or catalysts for the area were examined for their potential and possible impacts on Lower 8th Street.

It became apparent to the community that Lower 8th Street could attract quality economic development and a desirable mix of uses, but that a development program beyond what existing zoning could allow may be necessary to create the demand and user base to sustain the new uses.

At this juncture the discussions and dialogue became more focused and even robust as various density and height concepts were explored to “test fit” the idea that new development, when well designed, could accommodate greater density while respecting, preserving and re-purposing existing historic structures to higher and better uses. Various height and density “flexibility” scenarios were presented, examined, and explored by the community—a true discussion of the art of the possible for Lower 8th Street.

While there was not total community consensus on an appropriate height or density for the area, there was consensus that it was possible to discuss height and density flexibility on identified squares in Lower 8th Street that could possibly exceed the existing 45’ height overlay. Those squares were identified to SQ 0906; SQ 0907; SQ 0930; and SQ 0976.

Any possible flexibility in height and density being allowed would be predicated on three key conditions:

- **Community involvement** in the development of and review of the proposed plans
- The **renovation** and **re-purposing** of significant historic structures as a meaningful part of the overall project
- The **quality** of the proposed development’s site plan, massing and architecture

At the end of the process, this general community agreement that there was the possibility of additional density and height flexibility on identified sites after community review, input and approval created a fundamental baseline of trust among all participants—the community stakeholders, the BID, and Lower 8th Street property owners.

The community trusts that the property owners and developers will not seek a blanket removal of the ES Overlay as well as the historic district overlay, that they will not seek an area-wide up-zoning to allow more density and height, and that they will work in good faith with the community on proposed projects that would allow greater flexibility in density and height.

The property owners and developers trust that there is a climate and desire for investment in the Lower 8th Street area, that the community and its stakeholders will openly discuss individual development projects and the possibility of flexibility in density and height increases on a case-by-case basis, and that they will work with the project teams on site, design and massing concepts.

The Capitol Riverfront BID trusts that all participants support a shared vision for Lower 8th Street and that this can involve the possibility of flexibility in density and height, that the community and the property owners will work together in good faith to achieve the shared vision, and that Office of Planning will work with all parties to achieve the recommended elements of the Vision Process recommendations.

A fundamental trust has been established, and this allowed for honest and forward thinking discussions to occur regarding the future of the Lower 8th Street area. We think that this document reflects the vision and aspirations of all participants for the area, and that it can serve as a guideline for the ultimate achievement of that vision. These recommendations represent an opportunity to capitalize on emerging development projects and other economic catalysts in order to unlock the stalled potential of Lower 8th Street, SE.

These recommendations are being submitted to the Office of Planning for their review and to serve as a framework for decisions regarding:

- 1) **Future development proposals in the Lower 8th Street area;**
- 2) **Future public investment strategies in the area;**
- 3) **Future analysis in the area by DDOT or the Office of Planning; and**
- 4) **Future Planned Unit Development (PUD) applications for individual development projects on the squares identified as candidates for flexibility in density and height.**



