

**NoMA**

***VISION PLAN AND  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY***

**WOWV**

NORTH of MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE



# NoMA

VISION PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



## Acknowledgements

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# A Letter from Mayor Williams

Dear Resident and Stakeholder in the District of Columbia:

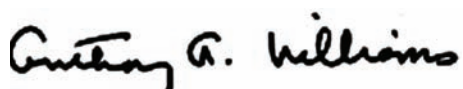
I am so pleased to present the NoMA Vision and Development Strategy, a plan for creating a great neighborhood. Prepared over the past year, this plan is the result of contributions by residents of Near Northeast, Eckington, Northwest One, Ivy City, Brookland, Stanton Park, Bates, Bloomingdale, Capitol Hill, as well as a number of property owners. The resulting plan is proof of the importance of teamwork and citizen involvement in generating ideas and setting priorities to achieve the shared goal of making a better DC. It calls for new residences, shopping, offices and open space, balanced with preserving and protecting the character of the lower-scale neighborhoods on the edges of the area.

In addition to thanking the contributing citizens, I want to thank the District government agencies involved in this effort and the sister agencies that partnered with them, including the National Capital Planning Commission, the DC Economic Partnership, the National Capital Revitalization Corporation, WMATA, Casey Trees, the Downtown BID, and others.

Throughout the process of rebuilding this part of the city, there will be many partners and hopefully, a diversity of ideas to design and grow the area organically. During that process, I look forward to seeing neighborhood residents -- informed and involved -- but also engaged in the rebuilding effort, perhaps opening businesses and providing neighborhood services. It is especially rewarding to see that the NoMA BID is well on its way to formation and that it includes in its mission, the management of a neighborhood jobs program to provide employment opportunities within NoMA, by connecting local residents to good jobs.

Mount Vernon Triangle, Northwest One, the Southeast and Southwest waterfronts, and NoMA have areas where large amounts of new development can take place. These opportunities and the way in which we respond to them will shape the future of Central Washington. We need to strive for identity, livability, walkable streets, and a vibrant mix of uses that blend harmoniously with existing neighborhoods.

Sincerely,



Anthony A. Williams  
Mayor

## Advisory Committee:

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## SMALL AREA PLAN ADOPTION PROCESS

The NoMA Vision Plan and Development Strategy's legal status will be as a Small Area Plan. Small Area Plans are prepared for places in the city where District intervention is necessary to manage growth, promote revitalization, or achieve other long-range planning goals. Examples include the H Street NE corridor, the Takoma Metro Station area, and the Shaw/Convention Center area. Small Area Plans are not part of the Comprehensive Plan. As specified in the DC Code, Small Area Plans supplement the Comprehensive Plan by providing detailed direction for areas ranging in size from a few city blocks to entire neighborhoods or corridors. Once a Small Area Planning Process is completed with the community, the Office of Planning (OP) prepares a legislative package for transmittal from the Mayor to the City Council for adoption by resolution. The legislative package includes:

- 1) Transmittal letter from the Mayor to the DC Council Chair
- 2) Copy of the Plan
- 3) Transcript from the Mayor's Public Hearing
- 4) Draft resolution

The draft resolution is also submitted to the Office of the Attorney General to determine the legal sufficiency of the document and to the Chief Financial Officer to determine the fiscal implications of the Plan. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development provides general coordination of plan implementation, in close partnership with the citizens and other stakeholders. While the District government will manage public investment, much of the Plan's success hinges on the participation of the private sector. A strong public-private partnership must be formed with continued guidance and support from residents. The long-term success of the Plan also depends heavily on community leadership and individual action including the formation of organizations including civic associations and a Community Improvement District (CID).

# CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>NoMA Vision.....</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>Envisioning the New Neighborhood.....</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Planning Fundamentals.....</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Building on NoMA's History.....</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Great Places in NoMA.....</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<i>A Real Mixed-Use Neighborhood</i>	
<i>Mixed-Use/Creative Industries District</i>	
<i>Streets as Neighborhood Places</i>	
<i>Burnham Spine</i>	
<i>Burnham Park</i>	
<i>K Street Linear Park</i>	
<i>Union Station Hub</i>	
<i>Uline Arena &amp; Plaza</i>	
<b>NoMA Development Strategy.....</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>One: Land Use Mix.....</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>Two: Infrastructure &amp; Transportation.....</b>	<b>3.12</b>
<b>Three: Public Realm &amp; Open Space.....</b>	<b>3.18</b>
<b>Four: Identity &amp; Building Design.....</b>	<b>3.24</b>
<b>Five: Existing Neighborhoods.....</b>	<b>3.27</b>
<b>Six: Environment &amp; Sustainability.....</b>	<b>3.30</b>
<b>Plan Economics.....</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>General Market Conditions.....</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>NoMA's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities &amp; Threats.....</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>Economic Impact of NoMA Development.....</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Implementation.....</b>	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>Economic Development Tools - Incentives &amp; Catalysts.....</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>Character Area Development Guidelines.....</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<i>Central NoMA</i>	
<i>Transition Area A</i>	
<i>Transition Area B</i>	
<i>Transition Area C</i>	
<i>H Street West</i>	
<i>R-4 Residential</i>	

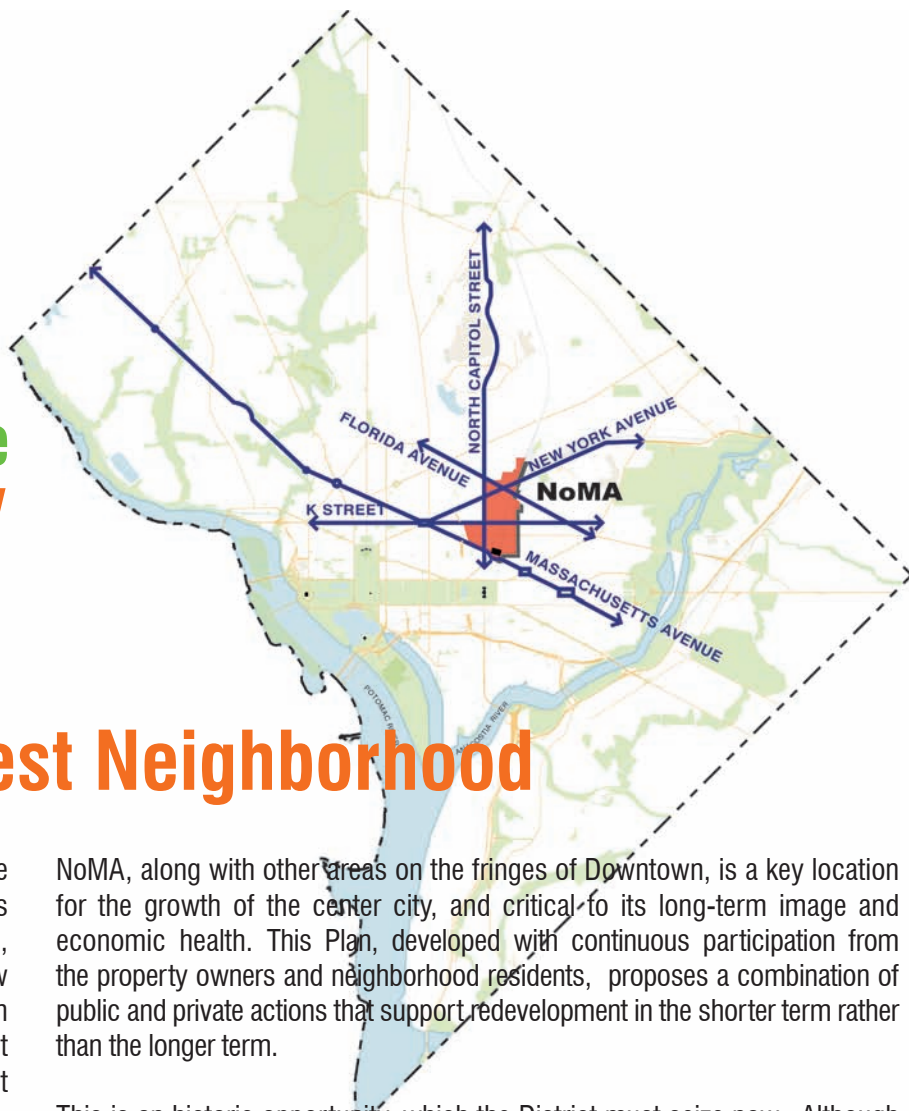


# APPENDICES

<b>Recent, Proposed &amp; Planned Development.....</b>	<b>A.1</b>
<b>Zoning, CID, &amp; Special Assessment Boundaries.....</b>	<b>B.1</b>
<b>Supporting Transportation Data.....</b>	<b>C.1</b>
<b>Supporting Market Assumptions.....</b>	<b>D.1</b>
<b>NCPC'S National Capital Urban Design &amp; Security Plan.....</b>	<b>E.1</b>
<b>Street Sections Showing Public Space.....</b>	<b>F.1</b>

# NoMA

## North of Massachusetts Avenue Vision Plan & Development Strategy



## NoMA: Washington's Newest Neighborhood

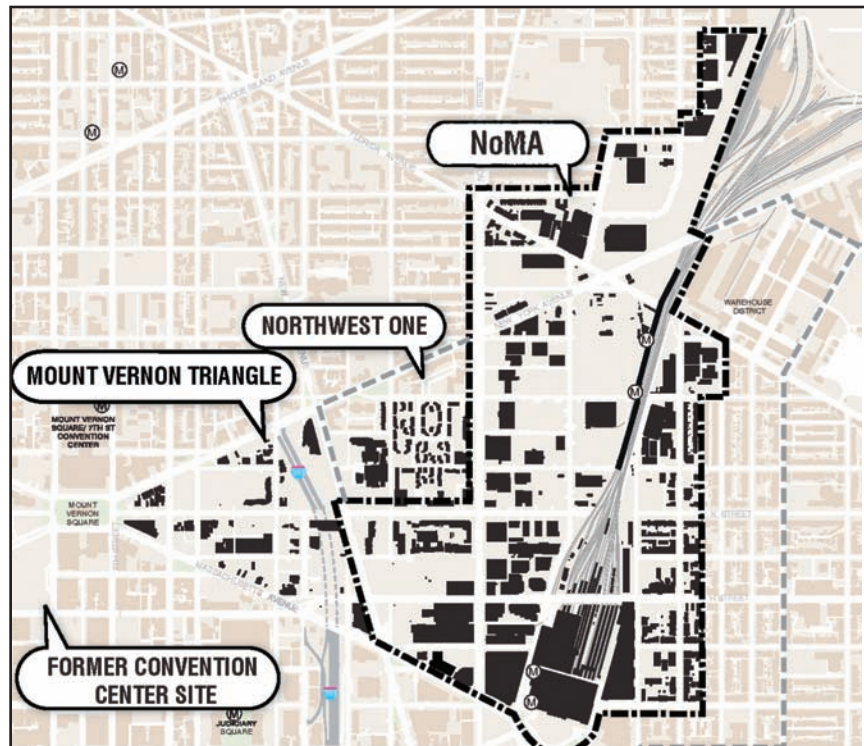
The NoMA area presents an incredible opportunity for the District, with the possibility of well over 20 million square feet of development. If the land is developed with a 50/50 mixture of commercial office and residential uses, with a substantial amount of ground floor retail, it could be a major new neighborhood – vibrant, healthy and serving as an attractive connection between the Near Northeast and Eckington on the east and north, and Mount Vernon Triangle, Northwest One, Shaw, Bates and Bloomingdale on the west and south.

However, there are many barriers to achieving that vision. Much of the land has been vacant for years, in spite of unparalleled transportation access and proximity to Downtown and Capitol Hill. While several parcels are being marketed with attractive renderings of gleaming new developments, only one new private construction project has actually broken ground. There are no amenities to interest potential residents or office tenants. The main north-south street within the area, First Street NE, is pitted and barren, missing curbs and sidewalks in many areas and lacking trees and landscaped open space. The current uses, truck parking, a rundown inter-city bus depot, a methodone clinic and numerous vacant buildings, discourage investors.

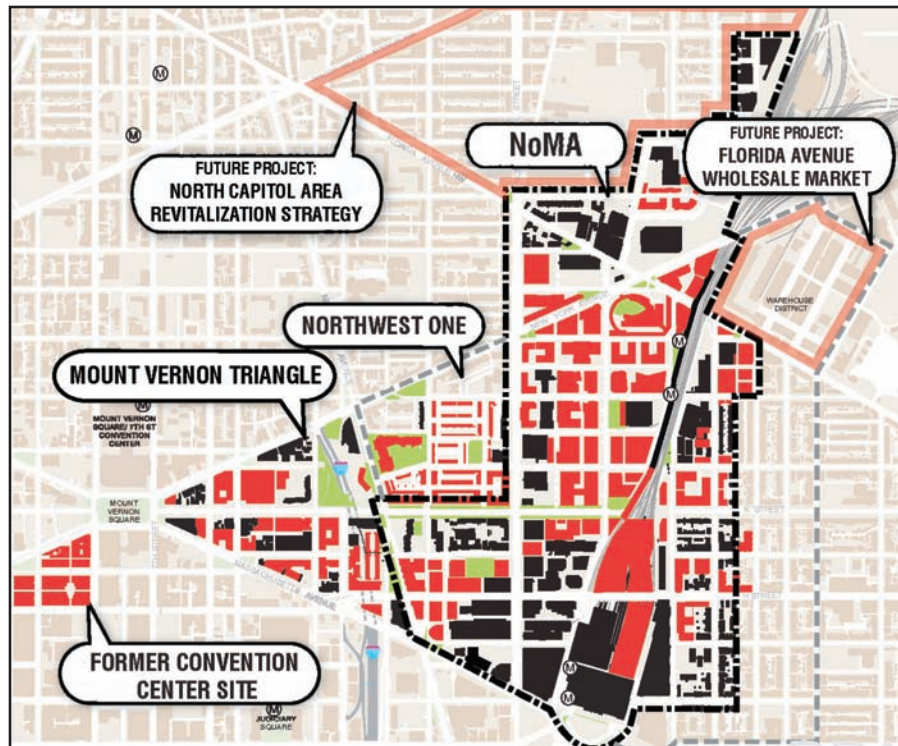
NoMA, along with other areas on the fringes of Downtown, is a key location for the growth of the center city, and critical to its long-term image and economic health. This Plan, developed with continuous participation from the property owners and neighborhood residents, proposes a combination of public and private actions that support redevelopment in the shorter term rather than the longer term.

This is an historic opportunity, which the District must seize now. Although there has been a weakening of the housing market, there is still an underlying strength built on continued job creation in the Downtown, and it can still compete on even footing for commercial office users. However, that also means that the office market, which is quickly running out of sites west of New Jersey Avenue, will soon be a stronger competitor for space in NoMA. The current zoning provides no leverage to achieve residential development at the level of a 50/50 mix that all acknowledge would make for the most attractive and lively neighborhood. It also would bring the best return for DC taxpayers; given the structural imbalance built into the District's financial situation, it is crucial to achieve more taxpaying, employed District residents.

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NoMA today is an isolated area that divides the surrounding communities. Apart from a few recent developments, it consists of numerous empty lots with a few remaining unique industrial buildings and structures. Union Station and the Northeast Corridor rail lines cut through the area's eastern edge.



NoMA tomorrow will be Washington's newest neighborhood. A vibrant, mixed-use community will reconnect the surrounding neighborhoods and join the redevelopment of Northwest One, Mount Vernon Triangle and the former Convention Center site in transforming Center City Washington.



# RECOMMENDATIONS: A Development Strategy in 6 Parts

## ONE: Land Use Mix

*Provide a diverse mix of uses that creates a variety of options for living, working, shopping, recreation, and culture*

For NoMA to become a mixed-use, active neighborhood, this plan aims for a 50-50 mix of commercial and residential uses west of the railroad tracks, and primarily residential uses east of the tracks. It envisions a lively work environment; a distinctive “Creative Industries, Mixed-Use” area, focused on Uline Arena; hotel development that takes advantage of NoMA’s proximity to the New York Avenue Metrorail Station and Union Station, major transportation corridors, and the Capitol complex; a coordinated retail strategy with ground floor retail in key locations; and a diversity of housing products and household types.

## TWO: Transportation & Infrastructure

*Pursue a balanced approach to transportation, creating a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with improved transit accessibility and vehicular circulation*

In order to achieve a neighborhood that balances walking, biking, transit, and driving; this Plan proposes a number of improvements for accessibility, functionality, safety, and increased capacity, including: the planned redesign of the New York-Florida Avenue intersection; the re-introduction of smaller blocks and a finer-grained network; the consolidation of service, loading and parking access away from pedestrian-oriented streets; designs concepts for the reconstruction of 1st St NE; and traffic calming and diversion to improve neighborhood streets. Union Station’s role as multi-modal hub is enhanced with recommendations for improved northern access and planned expansion of citywide transit connections. Recommendations for Metropolitan Branch Trail improvements reinforce its importance as a transportation amenity.

## THREE: Public Realm & Open Space

*Create a vibrant, highly walkable environment with landscaped streets and attractive open spaces, active ground floors and pedestrian links*

With limited public land for open space, this Plan recommends capitalizing on: 1) street design that utilizes streets as landscaped, open space amenities, such as K Street “linear park”; 1st Street as NoMA’s “main street”, North Capitol Street as the “grand, symbolic boulevard”, and H Street as the east-west neighborhood connector and retail destination; 2) further enhancement of the Metropolitan Branch Trail as an open space recreational amenity; and 3) public art opportunities at railway underpasses. Future opportunities for additional recreation space include Uline Arena and other privately-owned spaces designed to be attractive and accessible to the public.

## FOUR: Identity & Building Design

*Design to a new standard of architecture and urban design to create a lasting, competitive identity*

Identity and market strength can be created through innovative contemporary architecture and distinct product types. The Plan calls for highlighting NoMA’s historic resources through a combination of preservation, renovation, adaptive re-use, and taking advantage of the area’s warehouse and transportation-related history. Emphasis is placed on the ground-floors and sidewalk-level pedestrian experience, ensuring a high-quality public realm.

## FIVE: Existing Neighborhoods

*Preserve and enhance rowhouse neighborhoods and guide new development to address unmet community needs*

Sensitivity to existing, surrounding neighborhoods and the conservation of existing rowhouse fabric and historic properties are a priority. The design of adjacent new development in transition areas should address use, scale, and parking issues. Transportation recommendations include improvements that discourage neighborhood “cut-throughs” on quiet residential streets and mitigate potential parking impacts. Destination retail uses are recommended on streets designated for special retail concentrations, not scattered through potentially incompatible areas.

## SIX: Environment & Sustainability

*Address sustainability with high performance design and environmentally-friendly planning, design, and construction*

With the current planning and development momentum in and around NoMA, there is a significant opportunity to pursue sustainability measures that employ techniques for energy efficiency, stormwater management, and improved air quality on a special district-wide basis. This Plan recommends the development of a *Sustainability Plan* for NoMA with specific goals for high performance, energy saving buildings, stormwater impact reduction, and other environment-friendly innovations. Inter-agency coordination, DC government initiatives, private sector leadership, and the creation of specialized resource management entities are recommended to get this accomplished.

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## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

# THE NoMA ACTION AGENDA

OP - Office of Planning  
 DMPED - Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development  
 WMATA - Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
 DDOT - District Department of Transportation  
 WASA - Water and Sewer Authority  
 BID - Business Improvement District  
 ZC - Zoning Commission  
 DCPL - DC Preservation League  
 CHRS - Capitol Hill Restoration Society  
 DCCA - DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

STRATEGY	ACTION	YEAR	LEAD ROLE
<b>Neighborhood Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid rezoning R-4 rowhouse areas</li> <li>Undertake the survey of historic properties and neighborhood areas for DC Historic District designation</li> <li>Study subdivision administrative procedures with regard to their impact on R-4 row house areas</li> </ul>	Ongoing 2007 - 2012 2007 - 2008	OP/ANCs/ZC CHRS/DCPL/OP DCRA/ZC
<b>Land Use Mix</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a mix of uses including office, residential, hotel, retail, and recreation</li> <li>Consider tax-based incentives for the following uses:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail, including a grocery, in high-priority locations (Retail Plan, page 3.9)</li> <li>Residential tied to design standards and affordability</li> <li>Creative industries i.e. artist studios, recreation, culture, entertainment</li> <li>Infrastructure and amenities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Develop/adopt Retail Overlay Zoning w/curb cut restrictions; convene Task Force</li> <li>Communicate that TDR Receiving Zones are to be exempt from Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning</li> </ul>	Ongoing FY2006 - 2007	OP/DMPED/Council OP/DMPED/Council  OP/ZC OP/ZC
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make transportation improvements to intersection of New York Avenue and Florida Avenue</li> <li>Rebuild 1st Street, NE as proposed in '07, re-design to support NoMA plan design goals</li> <li>Construct proposed underpass improvements and incorporate art installations</li> <li>Create a <i>NoMA Transportation Management Plan</i> (including pedestrian, bicycle &amp; transit)</li> <li>Amend DDOT’s <i>Street and Highway Plan</i> to incorporate recommendations from NoMA Plan</li> <li>Increase NoMA’s ability to handle projected traffic volumes, increase mobility and access by further study and construction of recommended improvements to signalization, street direction, street extensions</li> <li>Proceed with further study of the 2nd Street, NE extension between M and N Streets to include design and possible funding mechanisms</li> <li>Develop coordination/implementation strategy for roadway extensions and alley proposals</li> <li>Relocate bus routes to access new Metrorail Station; in the short term strengthen north-south transit service with shuttle connecting Metro Station area with Union Station</li> <li>Assist WMATA with <i>Metro Station Area Access Plan</i>, for safety improvements and wayfinding</li> <li>Develop better city-wide connections; study extension of K Street Transit Way to the tracks</li> <li>Ensure that Greyhound bus depot stays within proximity to the Amtrak, New York Avenue Metrorail Station and continue efforts to be incorporated into a multi-modal transit hub</li> </ul>	FY2007 - 2009 FY2007 FY2007 FY2007 FY2007 FY2007 - 2009  FY2007 - 2009  FY2007 - 2009 FY2006 - 2007  FY2006 - 2007 FY2006 - 2012 FY2007 - 2012	DDOT DDOT DDOT/OP/DCCA DDOT/WMATA DDOT WMATA/DDOT/BID  WMATA/DDOT/OP  CID/DDOT/OP WMATA/DDOT/OP  WMATA/DDOT/OP DDOT/OP/WMATA BID/GH/USDC
<b>Stormwater, Environment &amp; Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop water, sewer and utilities capacity study for NoMA; convene Task Force</li> <li>Provide interim infrastructure: sidewalks, basic streetscape improvements and other utilities</li> <li>Develop a coordinated approach for low-impact-development and bury utility lines</li> </ul>	FY2006 - 2007 Ongoing FY2007	WASA/PEPCO/Cable DDOT/WASA/PEPCO OP/DOE/BID
<b>Public Realm &amp; Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Zoning Overlay and transportation policies that restrict curb cuts on 1st and K Streets, NE</li> <li>Encourage linking accessible private open spaces and PUD proffers toward public amenities</li> <li>Continue work with DCCA to prepare public art program including temporary installations</li> <li>Prepare <i>NoMA Public Realm Plan</i> to address streets, sidewalks, with landscape plan and standards</li> </ul>	FY2006 - 2007 Ongoing FY2006 - 2008 FY2007	OP/DDOT/ZC OP/ZC/BID OP/DCCA/DDOT OP/DDOT/Stkhldrs
<b>Identity &amp; Building Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the dialogue and create a strategy for ensuring high quality architecture in NoMA</li> <li>Prepare design guidelines, review procedures, and benchmarks for the award of incentives</li> </ul>	Ongoing FY2007	OP/BID/Stkhldrs OP/BID/Stkhldrs

# NoMA

## North of Massachusetts Avenue Vision Plan & Development Strategy

### Potential Build-Out

#### AREA SIZE:

The NoMA planning area (represented by the black boundary on page 2.2) covers approximately 358 acres and 50 city blocks, much of which is vacant or otherwise subject to redevelopment.

#### DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL:

Potential development in the NoMA planning area could range between twenty and twenty-six million square feet, including approximately two million square feet of air-rights development above the railway tracks. As recommended in this Plan, that would include an approximate 50/50 split between residential and commercial space, translating into:

- 10,000 - 13,000 residential units, providing new housing for between 16,000 and 24,000 people.
- 10 - 13 million square feet of new office space, providing employment for between 40,000 and 58,000 daytime workers.
- \$975 million in tax revenue collected over 20 years assuming a 10 year build-out.



Potential Build-out of NoMA Neighborhood Looking South Toward the U.S. Capitol

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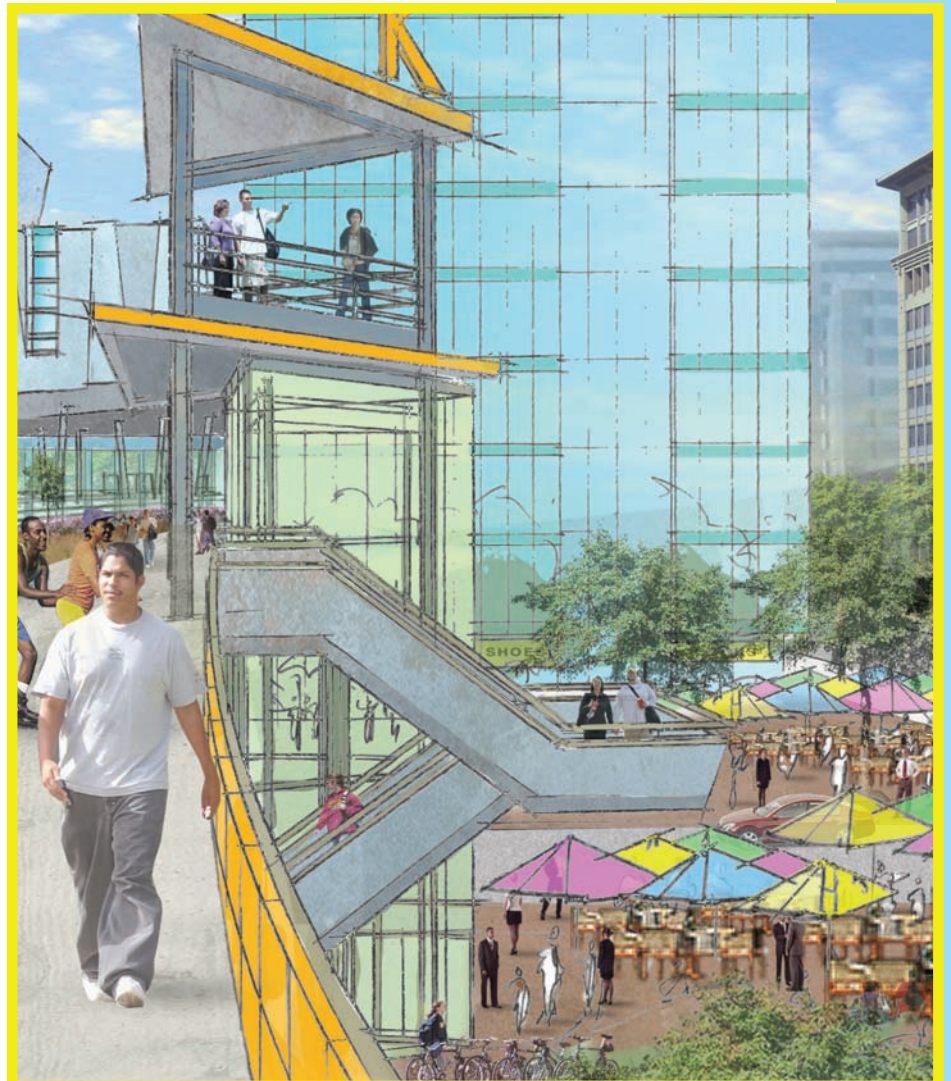
### Why We Need A Plan...

The NoMA Vision Plan and Development Strategy provides a vision of a vibrant neighborhood, as well as a clear and targeted implementation plan for public and private actions to achieve it. It illustrates individual developments that form a coherent neighborhood, connected by a public system of adequate, pedestrian-friendly streets with retail services and open spaces for residents and workers, and infrastructure that supports the dramatic growth expected in the area. It recommends well-coordinated investments, undertaken as new development incrementally transforms the area. We can not risk building individual projects that are disconnected, resulting in isolated areas and spillover effects that threaten stable adjacent neighborhoods. This plan builds on current real estate market momentum, reflects a wide range of interests and needs, and was developed with a high degree of involvement and consensus among stakeholders.

### A Collaborative Effort

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP) led a team of District agency representatives, urban planners and technical advisors in creating the NoMA Vision Plan and Development Strategy. The team collaborated throughout with many citizens and neighborhood leaders, and the resulting plan benefitted greatly from their involvement.

- The NoMA *Advisory Committee* was formed to represent varied interests in the area's future, and they provided ideas and feedback throughout the planning process.
- The *Technical Advisory Committee* was comprised of expert staff from District agencies and other groups that met regularly to develop the infrastructure information and recommendations in the Plan.
- Three public meetings were held, providing open forums for community input that was solicited through discussion and written questionnaires. In addition, presentations to local community groups and Advisory Neighborhood Commissions were made throughout.
- A series of one-on-one stakeholder interviews, an ongoing dialogue with the "NoMA Corridor Stakeholders Coalition", property owners and residents contributed to the Plan's content.



1 "Burnham Spine", The elevated Metropolitan Branch Trail at K and First Streets, NE





2 Looking North, First Street, NE  
New Air-Rights Construction Along the "Burnham Spine"



3 Public Space at First and K Streets, NE, Dubbed "Burnham Park"

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4 Looking East in Central NoMA  
New Construction Along An East-West Residential Street



5 Proposed Relationship Between New Infill Residential and Surrounding Rowhouse Neighborhood

## Plan Economics

This Plan has been developed both as a response to the existing market, and as a vehicle to consider ways in which planning, infrastructure investment, and other actions can stimulate and shape that market. Overall, the market in Washington DC has been strong for an extended period of time, and this underlying strength indicates that there is an opportunity for a range of positive outcomes within NoMA. Based on sustained market conditions and the large amount of available land in NoMA, the District has the opportunity to capitalize on this area to continue capturing a significant share of office, retail, hotel, and residential growth in the region. At full build-out, NoMA is capable of generating an even split of new office and residential development, consisting of approximately 10 million SF of each, supporting a conservative estimate of 300,000 SF of retail. Demand in a variety of sectors, presents an invaluable opportunity for DC to grow in a balanced way for longer-term sustainability.

In summary, market analysis indicates that the development of NoMA into a successful neighborhood depends on a shared vision, a compelling identity in the marketplace, and the commitment to invest in improved public spaces and adequate infrastructure. The cost of implementation will be repaid through significant long-term gains to the City. Assuming a 20-year build-out of the area, 662 million of tax revenue in 2006 dollars would be collected from the NoMA neighborhood over those 20 years. Assuming a 10 year build-out, 974 million of tax revenue would be collected over the same 20 years.

## Implementation

The transformation of NoMA requires a revitalization strategy that aims to improve the physical environment and, correspondingly, the area's image and identity. Further, in the context of limited public resources, the goal is to achieve as much success as possible in early stages in order to establish a precedent and harness the existing momentum of the private market. Up-front public investment is critical to accomplishing this. The implementation strategy of the NoMA Vision Plan is rooted in the following: short-term investment in planning, design, and infrastructure upgrades to transform NoMA's image into a viable location for immediate development; and, long-term planning and incentives for sustaining development that is compatible with nearby neighborhoods.

The most immediate catalyst for improving the outlook for NoMA is an expedited schedule of public infrastructure improvements. Additional economic incentives could drive private development in a direction that ensures a mix of uses and encourages development in the shorter term rather than longer term. Specific development catalysts recommended include tax increment financing (TIF), tax abatement for preferred development, and a special assessment on area property owners to create a Community Improvement District to achieve other goals.

