Recent General Plan Updates in the Washington, DC Region

Tanya Stern
Deputy Planning Director
Montgomery County Planning Department

Former Deputy Director for Planning, Engagement & Design, DC Office of Planning

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DC Comprehensive Plan

Background
2004 Framework to guide creation of a new Comprehensive Plan

Foundation of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan

2006 Adopted Comprehensive Plan
Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements

20-year vision for DC’s growth & development

Adopted by DC Council in 2006

First amended in 2011—mostly technical corrections & small no. of policy amendments

Current Amendment Cycle launched in 2016

PlanDC.dc.gov
The Plan’s 5 Core Themes

1) Managing Growth & Change
2) Creating Successful Neighborhoods
3) Increasing Access to Education & Employment
4) Connecting the Whole City
5) Building Green & Healthy Communities
Citywide Elements

Framework
Land Use
Transportation
Housing
Environmental Protection
Economic Development
Parks, Recreation & Open Space
Urban Design
Historic Preservation
Community Services & Facilities
Educational Facilities
Infrastructure
Arts & Culture

Future Land Use Map

Generalized Policy Map
Amending the DC Comprehensive Plan

PLAN DC
THE DC OFFICE OF PLANNING

PlanDC.dc.gov
Why DC’s Comp Plan is being updated

Rapid population growth

100,000+ new residents over last decade

Almost 1 million residents projected by 2045
(700,000 in 2018)

Implementation Element calls for regular updates

Integrate recent land use & citywide policy plans
DC Comp Plan Update: Address Emerging Issues

Resilience

New cross-cutting policy framework

- Flooding
- Social/Economic Inequities
- Aging Infrastructure
- Climate Change
- Sea Level Rise
- Extreme Heat
- More Frequent Severe Storms
- Terrorism & Cybersecurity
- Utility Disruptions

- Land Use
- Equity
- Housing
- Economy
- Transportation & Other Infrastructure
- Quality of Life
DC Comp Plan Amendment

Outreach & Community Engagement

2016-2017

WE'VE BEEN BUSY. In addition to the Comprehensive Plan outreach and engagement outlined below, Office of Planning staff has hosted or participated in 60+ meetings and events with partner agencies, BIDs, community groups, non-profits, and advocacy groups since March 2016.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Planning & Preservation for Progress event kicks off Comp Plan engagement

OP's largest ad campaign launches for Comp Plan

plandc.dc.gov project website launched

TOWN HALLS

500 attendees at seven locations

600 survey responses received

OPEN CALL FOR AMENDMENTS

100+ office hours at 26 locations across DC

10 "Meeting in a Box" packets distributed

4,600+ downloads and 13,000 unique pageviews on website

3,000+ public amendments submitted to OP

TARGETED MEETINGS

Two ANC workshops

Data Roundtable

ANC workshops

Transit-Oriented Development Forum

Design Forum

Historic Preservation Forum

source: DC Office of Planning, plandc.dc.gov
5 Lessons I Learned

From working on a General Plan update
Lesson Learned #1

General Plan updates are complex projects

General Plan updates are **not** like Small Area Plans/Master Plans/Sector Plans

Affects every aspect of update
Lesson Learned #2

General Plan updates **challenge your imagination**

**Time Frame**

**Decades**

*not 5-10 years*

Challenges you to:

- Think far beyond immediate issues & yet solve for them at the same time
- Envision what may not exist now, yet is anticipated or desired—far into the future
- Consider & craft policy for emerging issues while still developing an understanding of them (e.g., A/Vs, resilience)

**Range of Influence**

**General Plans are more than land use plans**

*DC’s Comp Plan addresses not only land use, housing & transportation*

- but also a **wide range of topics** that affect communities & their future

  *Public facilities — Community Services — Historic preservation — Environment — Utility Infrastructure, etc.*

- and impacts **other local & federal agencies**
Lesson Learned #3

General Plans’ **range of influence** requires **different strategies for policy & partnerships**

(Because) **General Plans are more than land use plans**

**Education** about General Plan +

**collaborations with** affected **local/state/federal agencies are critical**

- General Plan (should) inform public investments
- Provides long-range roadmap for other agencies—but **requires ongoing collaboration beyond current leaders/administrations**
Lesson Learned #4

Be mindful of other current issues that may impact General Plan update

Washington Post, March 20, 2018

D.C. Petites
Dry D.C. planning document fuels heated debate over future of expensive city

Washington Business Journal, May 11, 2018

Commercial Real Estate – Real Estate Inc. Extra
Angry D.C. developers fight back against appeals from angry citizens groups

Hot Issue:

DC Court of Appeals vacated several DC Zoning Commission approvals of Planned Unit Development proposals

- Proposed amendments to DC Comp Plan Framework Element submitted to DC Council in January 2018
- Council public hearing on March 20, 2018—270+ witnesses signed up
- One major topic of discussion—how Comp Plan provides guidance for Zoning Commission review of PUDs
Lesson Learned #5

General Plans are highly influential—and most people don’t know about them

General Plans:

- Are often infrequent, because of long-time frame
- Cover entire jurisdiction—affects everyone
- Address multiple topics/issues
- Present high-level policy (not zoning or site-specific land use strategies)
- Have a multi-decade view
- Can take 2+ years to complete

Why would people want to spend 2+ years working on this??

Engagement needs to be more expansive—
reach approach message partnerships

Speak to people’s values

This is about our community’s future

Educate about what planning is & the value of planning
Thank you!

Tanya Stern
Deputy Planning Director
Montgomery County Planning Department
301-495-4508
tanya.stern@montgomeryplanning.org

For more information about the DC Comprehensive Plan Amendment Cycle:

DC Office of Planning
202-442-7600
plandc@dc.gov

PlanDC.dc.gov