

Buzzard Point Urban Design Framework Summary

DRAFT



Government of the District of Columbia



Office of Planning



Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic



Department of Transportation



Department of General Services



Department of the Environment

The Goal

The physical improvements associated with the new South Capitol Street bridge and soccer stadium will transform the public realm and accelerate the redevelopment of Buzzard Point. To ensure that the revitalization is consistent with the aspirations and needs of nearby residents, the District government is preparing an Urban Design Framework Plan for the Buzzard Point area. The Buzzard Point plan will inform and guide public and private development decisions for the next ten years. The purpose of the Buzzard Point Framework Plan is to:

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- Project Study Area**
- PROJECT STUDY AREA LEGEND**
- Project Site Boundary
 - Project Study Area
 - Fort McNair Boundary

The Context

The Buzzard Point Urban Design Framework builds on numerous plans and initiatives, like the South Capitol Street and Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge improvements that will create a three-acre open space and transform traffic circulation. Similarly, private investment surrounding Buzzard Point, such as The Yards, has also taken off in recent years.

The Concept

The design concept seeks to improve the public realm and physical environment of Buzzard Point and connect it with the emerging Capitol Riverfront area to the east. The urban design concept is intended to create a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood, improve pedestrian circulation, provide continuous public access to the water, identify new development opportunities that could increase the inventory of mixed-use development and affordable housing through inclusionary zoning, suggest ways to improve the environmental health of Buzzard Point, and enhance the physical connections to the surrounding community. Specific opportunities include new community gathering spaces defined by new development, more natural waterfront trails, and artistic treatments of urban system facilities (see below). Potomac Avenue would serve as a grand boulevard connecting with the Capitol Riverfront.



Notes on the Urban Design Concept

This initial urban design concept for Buzzard Point provides illustrative concepts for private properties and public rights-of-way. The plan does not alter zoning or land use designations for private parcels, but is intended to create an overall understanding of how development could function within the Buzzard Point area. Refinements and revisions will be made in subsequent versions as more input is received and more detailed information is processed. The design will evolve to more accurately reflect building envelopes, site design, roadway restrictions, grade changes, and other factors.

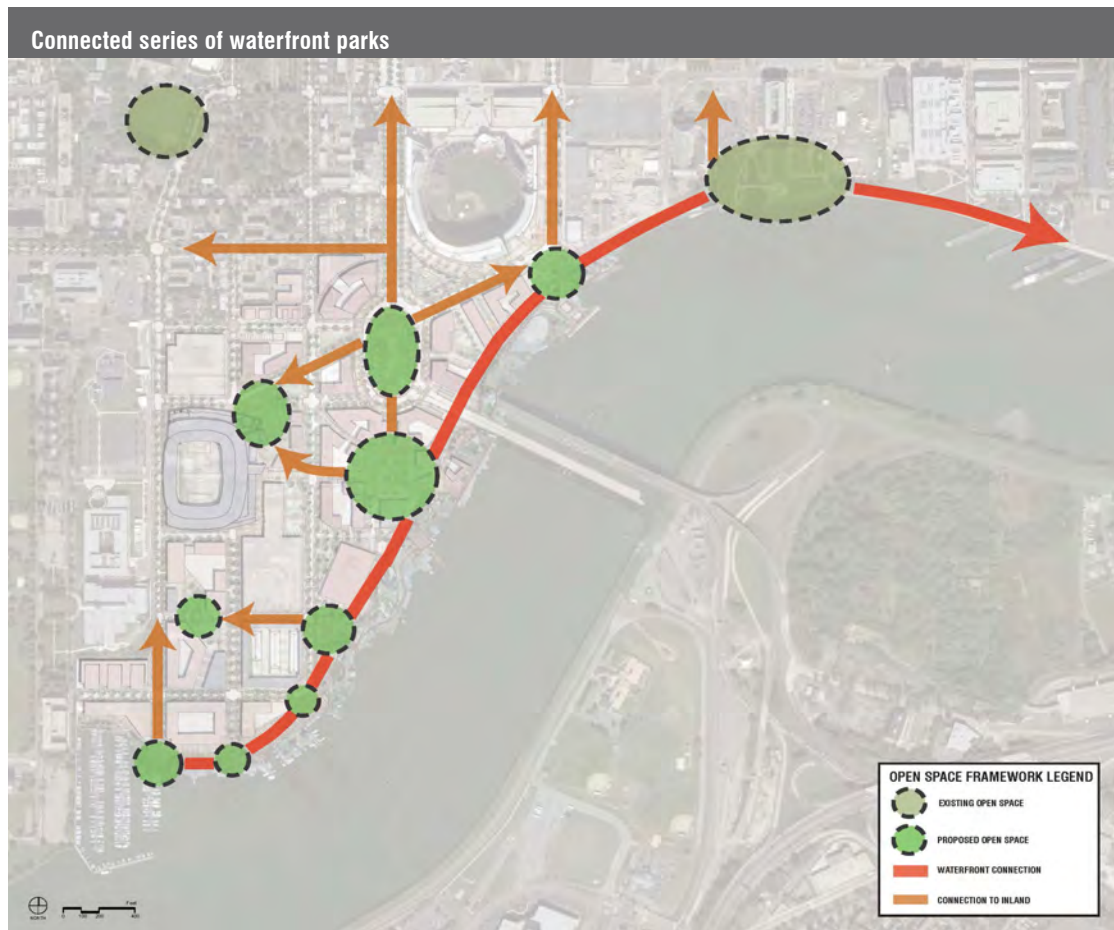
Graphic representation of Buzzard Point urban design plan



Public Realm

Today, Buzzard Point is an isolated peninsula of industrial uses and infrastructure, ill-defined streets and public space, and limited green space, along with some residential development within the study area. Informal gathering areas and park space are limited.

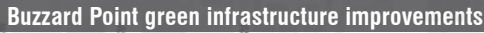
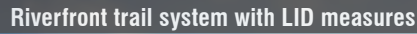
The urban design concept, as envisioned, would transform Buzzard Point into a vibrant, walkable neighborhood, with direct access to multi-modal transportation hubs, waterfront, parks, pedestrian nodes and compact mixed-use oriented developments. A walkable environment will be a key feature driving community growth and increased public amenities. A network of tree-lined streets and crosswalk improvements will promote greater access and connectivity between neighborhoods as well as safer interactions between vehicles, bikeways and pedestrians. Curbless street zones will knit sidewalks with parks and plazas into temporary social open spaces. Those social nexus would be strategically located, in direct view of the open space “oval,” the Anacostia Riverwalk trail, the soccer stadium and a potential future Maritime Museum. View corridors would be spatially defined throughout the neighborhood, connecting identifiable destinations and points of interest. The Buzzard Point urban framework plan would ensure that walkability is extended beyond its physical boundaries, directly connecting to the Anacostia Riverwalk trail and surrounding local grid network toward the Yards Park and other development along the Capitol Riverfront.



Notes on the Public Realm

The public realm design for Buzzard Point provides an overall concept of what would happen within public space, both existing and future. In some cases, the concept envisions re-opening of presently closed rights-of-way. In other cases, existing rights-of-way would be swapped with property owners in order to improve the overall connectivity of the area. Also, the full plan will include thorough analysis of potential regulatory such as development along the waterfront, to ensure compliance with current requirements.

Industry occupies much of the area within Buzzard Point, with few basic environmental control facilities in place. The public infrastructure does not currently support best management practices in addressing environmental conditions. Limited stormwater drains catch water runoff from streets and other paved surfaces, and few trees are present to mitigate the heat island effect and improve air quality. In addition, pre-existing hazardous materials will likely pose challenges to redevelopment as the area redevelops. Previous site investigations have indicated that low levels of soil and groundwater contamination are present within Buzzard Point. Consequently, redevelopment of Buzzard Point offers substantial opportunities to improve the environmental health of the area.



realm and private development. In concert with Sustainable DC, the streetscape and open spaces plan would provide substantial improvements to the air quality; reduce water pollution and urban heat island effect. More than a 1,000 trees could potentially be added to this area in consortium with low impact development (LID) measures (see graphic). Those measures, particularly along the widest streets, could include drought tolerant plantings, rain gardens, bioretention planters, permeable pavers, green roofs and underground cisterns for capture and retention of both rain and storm water run-off.

Some additional measures that promote sustainable planning, urban farming, and rooftop amenities could spur the growth of local economies while promoting healthier lifestyles. Additionally a set of measures geared toward the preservation and restoration of riparian ecosystems and wildlife habitats could offer great educational opportunities notwithstanding the benefits of having a clean riverfront edge. Those proposed measures support the DDOE RiverSmart Rewards and Clean Rivers rebate program, with great financial incentives for both property owners and large scale land developers.

In order to address the possible presence of hazardous materials, developers would conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments; remediation on a parcel-by-parcel basis would vary. For example, contractors could use minimize fugitive dust through wetting or covering soils. If present, contaminated groundwater would be treated by injecting neutralizing chemicals through wells or by removing groundwater through soil dewatering. Contaminated soils would be removed as part of site development activities until contaminants no longer exceed regulatory levels.

Housing and Community Development

Buzzard Point currently contains few residential units, primarily clustered around P and Q Streets SW, many of which are designated for low-income housing. Approximately one-third, or 80, of the 239 total James Creek public housing units are located within the Buzzard Point study area (the James Creek units straddle P Street, and therefore some are units are within the study area while others are outside the study area). The greater Southwest DC area as a whole contains a mix of housing units ranging in type and affordability. A total of 3,728 units of housing are found south of M Street SW and west of South Capitol Street, with a total of 906 units of public housing, including the estimated 80 units within the study area.

The Buzzard Point urban design concept seeks to protect the existing public housing within the study area and create additional residential opportunities. New development would provide a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and institutional, which would be more compatible to the adjacent neighborhood than the current industrial uses. This new commercial and residential mix would create a lively area with active public spaces. New residences and commercial spaces would benefit from the proximity of the water and to nearby amenities, such as Yards Park. In the northern portion of the study area, development would help buffer existing residences through a transition zone of less intense uses and medium scale buildings. New residential development would be subject to inclusionary zoning policies, which would allow for additional affordable residential units.

The current development capacity of Buzzard Point is approximately 11.9 million square feet based on floor area ratio (FAR) allowed by the zoning code (Note: the calculation assumes a 20 percent reduction in total square footage from FAR to account for the potential limitations due to height and setback restrictions), with an estimated 5,480 residential units of which 370 would be designated affordable. With implementation of the urban design plan and the concentration of residential units envisioned along the waterfront, an initial estimate of 10.2 million square feet would be created, including 6,200 residential units, of which 400 would be designated affordable through inclusionary zoning.

	Capacity Under Current Zoning	Capacity under Current Zoning with Stadium	Anticipated Capacity with Stadium & Urban Design Plan
Potential Total Development Square	11.9 million	10.8 million	10.2 million
Potential Residential Development	6 million	5.8 million	6.8 million
Potential Total Residential Units	5,480	5,240	6,200
Potential Total Affordable Residential	370	360	400



Notes on Housing and Community Development

The analysis conducted regarding housing and community development is an initial attempt at understanding how much potential development could occur within Buzzard Point. It is simply the allowed floor area ratio (FAR) allowed for each parcel within the zoning, which is then reduced by 20 percent in an effort to consider the physical limitations of height restrictions and setback requirements. These figures were then adapted based on whether the property would be expected to have a commercial or residential focus and whether the entire property would be available. Similar to other areas, these numbers will be refined moving forward to provide a more fine-grain economic analysis.

Transportation

Today, Buzzard Point's transportation network is limited and does not meet the District's current streetscape design standards within the District. Streets are ill-defined, frequently without curb and gutter or sidewalks, often leaving roadways indistinguishable from the adjacent private property. No public transit service or bicycle facilities are located within Buzzard Point, although the Riverwalk bicycle route is marked along P Street SW, just to the north of the study area. Also, bus service is available near the study area.

In the near term, the South Capitol Street bridge and soccer stadium improvements will improve access to major regional connections and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, including along the Anacostia River. As part of this effort, DDOT would reconfigure the intersection of South Capitol Street with Potomac Avenues, Q, and R Streets as a traffic "oval." The Buzzard Point Urban Design Plan seeks to build on the bridge improvements by identifying secondary and neighborhood vehicular streets, as well as pedestrian and bicycle routes (see next page). Development in Buzzard Point would reinforce the green space of the South Capitol Street oval, visually defining an otherwise open area.

Traffic and Parking

Traffic in Southwest DC often winds its way through existing neighborhoods and, in Buzzard Point, along poorly delineated roadways with confusing traffic patterns. Additionally, streets within Buzzard Point are frequently one way and some appear to be extended driveways rather than public roadways.

The Buzzard Point Urban Design Plan would improve the physical connections and the streetscape conditions in the area. The plan identifies a hierarchy of roadways to help avoid traffic in existing neighborhoods. The primary routes would continue to be South Capitol and M Streets, while P, Half, V and 2nd Streets would create a loop for vehicular circulation throughout Buzzard Point, which essentially functions as a cul-de-sac. Tertiary roadways would form more localized connections in the rest of the study area.

Parking for events at the soccer stadium would continue to use the lots located to the north and east of Nationals Ballpark. New development would likely include underground parking in order to accommodate new employment and residences. Streetscape improvements would also augment existing street parking by allowing areas to be clearly marked.

Transit

Buzzard Point has multiple connections to existing Metrorail Stations. Both the Navy Yard-Ballpark and Waterfront stations are within approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the study area. However, the Navy Yard-Ballpark Station is equipped to accommodate a much higher capacity. In addition, the Poplar Point station and parking garage are located a little more than one mile away. No bus service directly serves Buzzard Point at this time although routes could be added. In the future, the District's streetcar program is poised to provide services to the area. Streetcar lines currently in the planning phases may terminate at Buzzard Point. The Buzzard Point Urban Design Concept Plan is intended to be flexible and to support streetcar development and operation, while recognizing that the implementation of the system at Buzzard Point would be several years away. Furthermore, the Urban Design Concept identifies several sites south of the stadium that could support streetcar operation facilities.

Pedestrian and Bike

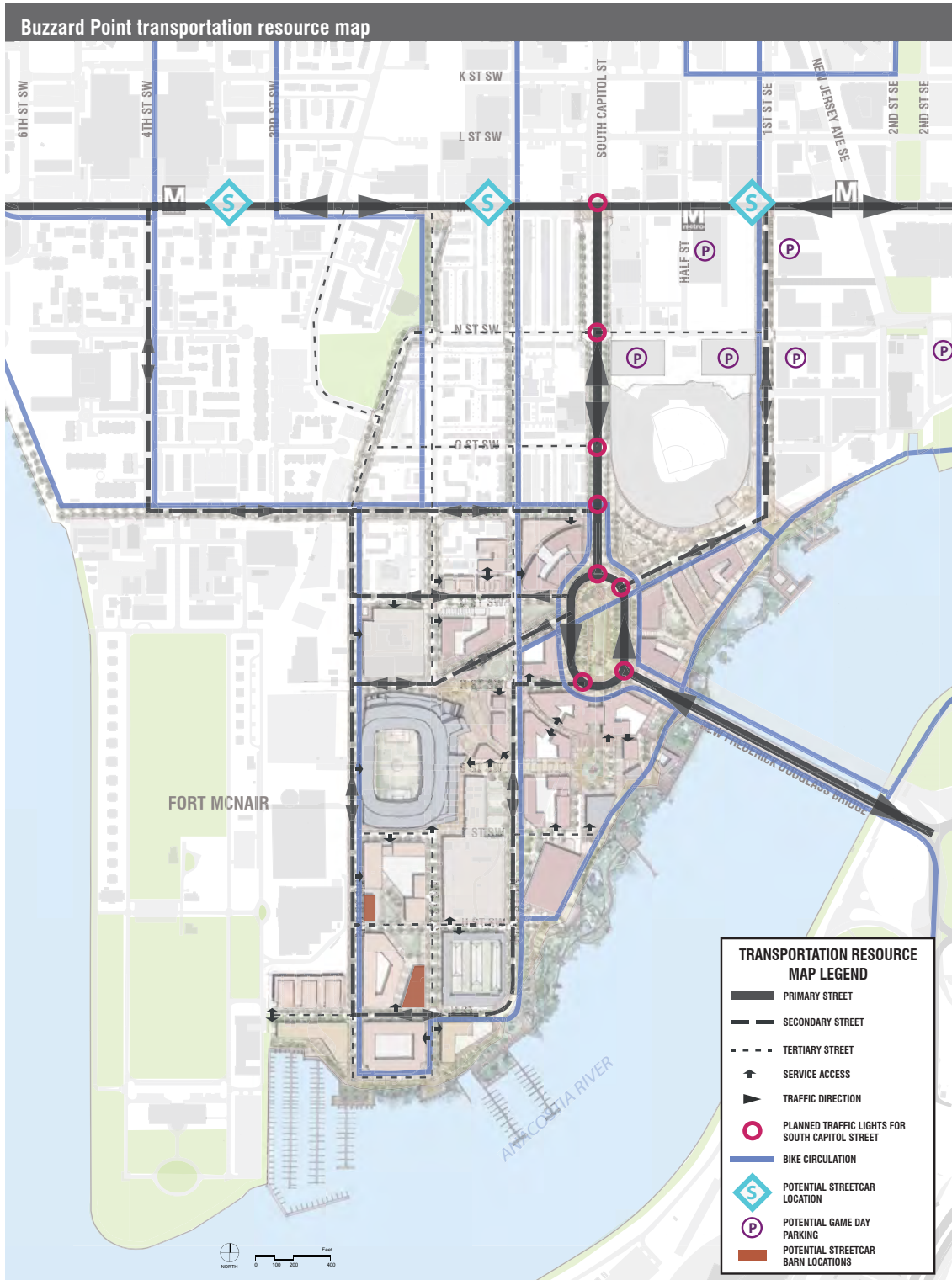
Currently, there are limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities within Buzzard Point, such as a lack of bike racks and inconsistent sidewalks. The Anacostia Riverwalk skirts the area, with P Street connecting Southwest Waterfront and South Capitol. Future improvements planned in the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative for the Riverwalk include connections along 2nd Street to V Street, following the Anacostia east to South Capitol Street, and are captured by the design concept.

The Urban Design Plan would utilize a new esplanade along the Anacostia to enhance connections to the water and expand the formal trail network. The esplanade would facilitate east-west pedestrian circulation underneath the South Capitol Bridge, allowing pedestrians to avoid busy roadways and providing an attractive waterside experience. The design would carefully consider pedestrian safety connecting pedestrians along Potomac Avenue at South Capitol Street. Within the Buzzard Point study area, the public realm would include bicycle racks, bike routes as shown in the Anacostia Watershed Initiative, and expansion of the Capital Bikeshare program.

The plan would also employ comprehensive streetscape improvements throughout existing neighborhoods. Such improvements would not alter vehicular movement in the area, but would offer improved vegetation and sidewalks within the public realm to augment existing pedestrian connections to Buzzard Point.



Buzzard Point transportation resource map



Notes on Transportation

The transportation analysis takes into consideration multiple circulation modes and strives to maximize connectivity. Similarly, the design attempts to address practical, everyday matters such as loading for commercial buildings. As more information regarding the South Capitol Street reconstruction, the soccer stadium design, and the potential needs of buildings emerge, the plan will be refined to address these issues.

Implementation

The Buzzard Point Urban Design Framework Plan is expected to be implemented over a series of years. Within the near term (5 years), the new South Capitol Street bridge and soccer stadium will initiate physical improvements. Further development of the area would be expected in the near and mid-term (5-10 years). Full development of the Capitol Riverfront and Buzzard Point areas would occur in the 10-20 year horizon.



Ongoing projects in and around Buzzard Point

