

# GEORGETOWN 2028

15 YEAR ACTION PLAN



Georgetown



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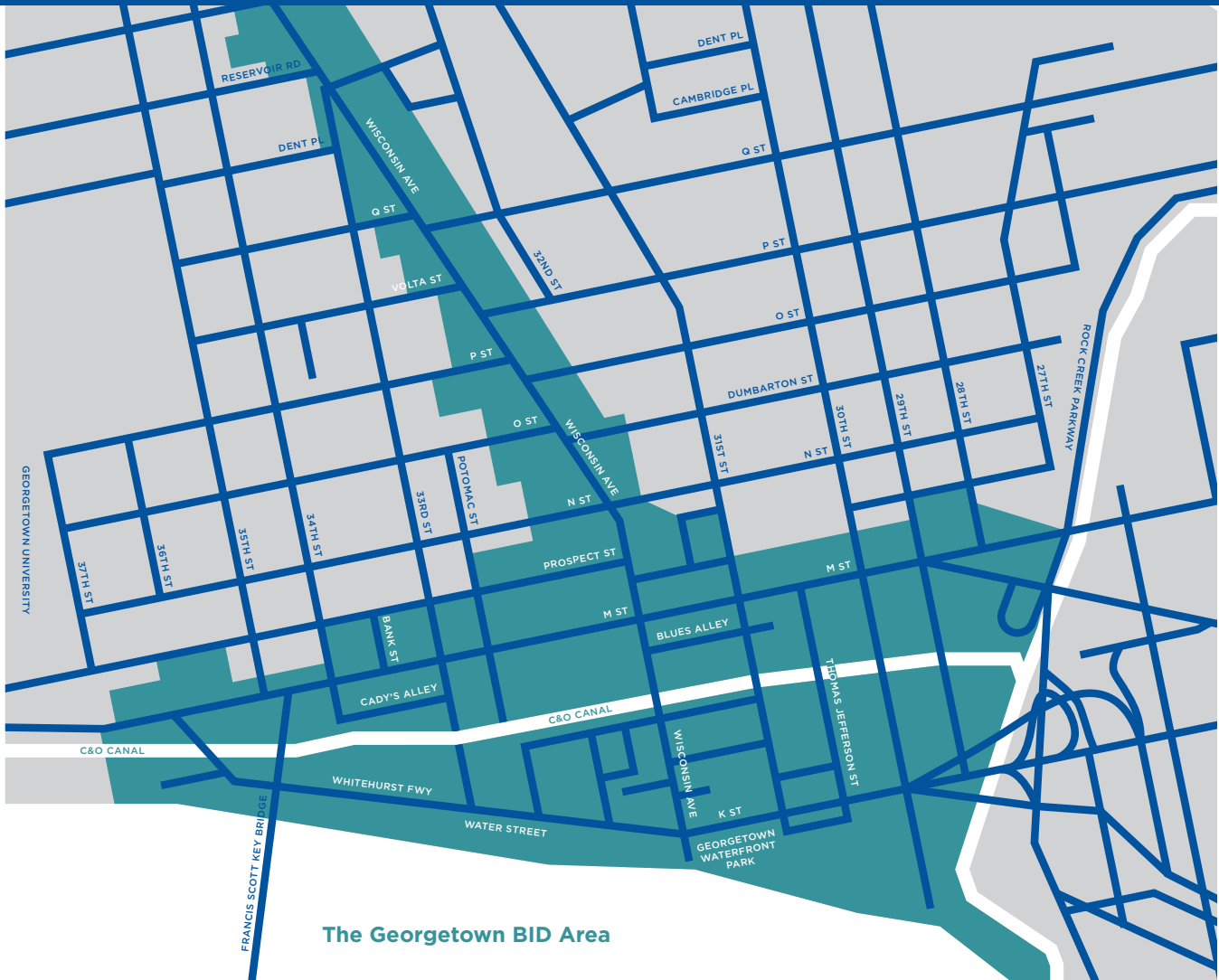
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The Transportation and Public Space appendices are not printed but are important parts of Georgetown 2028. They are available in pdf form on the BID's website at [georgetowndc.com/Georgetown2028](http://georgetowndc.com/Georgetown2028).



# Letter from the Georgetown 2028 Co-Chairs

The District of Columbia is changing faster than at any time in the past 70 years. The population is booming. The economy is diversifying. Traditionally sleepy neighborhoods are being transformed into vibrant mixed-use destinations. These changes – which benefit the entire city – present great opportunities and challenges for the Georgetown commercial district.

How does our commercial district contribute to the city's sustainability goals by attracting more customers, but not more vehicle congestion? How do we better leverage our unique waterfront and canal resources? How can we improve the pedestrian experience to support more economic activity? These are just some of the questions that we worked to answer through the Georgetown 2028 planning process. The resulting 2028 Plan takes a 15 year look into the future and suggests a vision and Action Agenda that, once implemented, will ensure that Georgetown remains a world-class destination for businesses, residents and visitors.

Georgetown 2028's intensive eight-month community engagement process has been the most ambitious planning effort ever undertaken by the Georgetown Business Improvement District. More than 200 participants generated over 100 ideas for Georgetown's future. Some were visionary, while others were obvious. Our Task Force spent dozens of hours discussing and debating ideas, and came to a consensus on those we believe should be pursued by the BID and the community in the years to come.

We thank our planning partners, especially members of ANC 2E, the Citizens Association of Georgetown, Georgetown University, the Georgetown Business Association, the National Park Service and the D.C. Government for their commitment of time and attention to this process. We have not only produced a plan together, but have also built stronger relationships and a deeper respect for the issues that are important to each of us. We are grateful for the guidance of our facilitator, Bill Potapchuk, from the Community Building Institute, whose counsel on every aspect of this process kept us on track for the better part of the year.

The Georgetown 2028 Plan and its accompanying appendices represent the extraordinary work of architects, planners, transportation professionals and citizens who shared their ideas for the future of Georgetown. They did far more work than we ever contemplated at the beginning of this process. They have been the backbone of this effort and we are indebted to them all.

Finally, we want to make clear that the publication of this Plan is not an end point. It is the beginning of the Georgetown BID's next five years of work to improve Georgetown's transportation infrastructure and management, public spaces and economy. We are excited for all the work to come, and together, we look forward to helping deliver a stronger Georgetown to the city and the region.

**Georgetown 2028  
Co-Chairs  
January 2014**

Crystal Sullivan  
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### About the Georgetown BID

The Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the accessibility, attractiveness and overall appeal of Georgetown. Established in 1999 by its property owners and merchants, the Georgetown BID has more than 1,000 members. The organization is located in the heart of Georgetown in Washington, D.C. and sets a standard of excellence in preserving historic charm while meeting contemporary needs. From marketing and special events, to transportation and streetscape, the Georgetown BID contributes to the vitality and quality of life in Georgetown. For more information please visit [georgetowndc.com](http://georgetowndc.com).

# It's Time for Improvement

**G**eorgetown is one of the most celebrated and instantly recognized neighborhoods in the nation. Since its founding as a port town in 1751 Georgetown has experienced numerous transformations, yet it continues to be a vibrant intersection of commerce, residential life and academia. Continuous reinvention has produced the neighborhood we inhabit today.

But what about the future?

Georgetown 2028 – the eight-months-long initiative that led to this Plan – was conceived as a strategic approach for the community to envision and plan for Georgetown's business district evolution over the next 15 years. This plan ensures that today's leaders can be certain of delivering this historic district to future generations and feel confident that Georgetown remains a world-class commercial district and one of the nation's most desirable destinations. Simply put, the 2028 vision is to build an economically stronger and more sustainable Georgetown commercial district while bolstering the residential community by preserving what is great about Georgetown, fixing what is broken and creating what is missing.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

# Why Now and Why Georgetown 2028?

Planning for the future is a tradition that has brought Georgetown leaders together since 1878, beginning with the formation of the Citizens Association of Georgetown. The CAG has guided progress in the residential community, while the Old Georgetown Board has protected the historic fabric of the neighborhood since 1950. Georgetown's Advisory Neighborhood Commission has shaped all neighborhood planning, development and regulatory issues that affect community life since its creation in 1974. Changing demographics, economic shifts and an evolving commercial landscape across the city and region signaled the need for a broad group to come together to develop a vision for Georgetown's future.

While many residents, business owners and visitors speak emphatically about the unique charm of the neighborhood, they also clamor for easier and more efficient transportation choices, desire more contemporary and high-quality restaurants, and long for the independent boutiques that once dominated Georgetown. Increasingly, they travel to other neighborhoods to dine, shop and be entertained. As history demonstrates, Georgetown is not immune to the vagaries of the changing local and national economic climate. Georgetown merchants today compete in an increasingly crowded marketplace, with new shopping and entertainment destinations emerging in neighborhoods across the city and the region.

How does Georgetown remain a strong commercial district and a neighborhood asset to the District of Columbia?

These were only some of the big questions facing community leaders when the Georgetown Business Improvement District launched Georgetown 2028 in April 2013. This ambitious planning process brought together a broad spectrum of more than 200 people representing all aspects of the community to collaborate on the necessary steps to enhance the Georgetown experience, attract more unique shops and restaurants, reduce office vacancies and address pressing transportation issues.

The Georgetown 2028 planning process was anchored by a diverse 21-member Task Force charged with developing a vision for the future of Georgetown's commercial district. They were advised by three working groups with more than 40 members. Participants were challenged to be as creative and forward thinking as they could. As this consensus plan illustrates, they exceeded that challenge, delivering more than 100 recommendations. Their collective vision and list of 75 action items outlined and prioritized here, directs community leaders, government entities and regulators to work together so that Georgetown remains the celebrated and timeless gem it has been for more than 250 years.



# Enhancing the Georgetown Experience

Everyone from residents of Prospect Street to tourists from Tokyo comes to Georgetown for the experience. People come for the history and architecture, to shop and dine, or to visit the Waterfront and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park. Georgetown offers a unique experience to all.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



## PUBLIC SPACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When we are honest about Georgetown in 2013, we note its many striking attributes, but we also recognize that key issues need to be addressed. Walking on the Canal towpath is one obvious item: skinny paths with little room to share with bicyclists or runners, staircases with broken steps, inadequate lighting and signs pointing to places that no longer exist. The areas of Wisconsin Avenue with vacant storefronts and buildings in disrepair deter shoppers from fully exploring the robust options found elsewhere in the retail district. And when one enters Georgetown from the four primary gateways, arrival into this historic neighborhood is neither clear nor representative of the best of Georgetown. We can do better.

In this first section, the 2028 vision concentrates on economic development and public spaces. There are specific proposals for the C&O Canal, gateways and streetscapes and Wisconsin Avenue. The second section focuses on transportation enhancements across multiple modes, with specific recommendations for a neighborhood Metro station, the K Street streetcar, improved parking management and transit efficiency, and studies for an aerial gondola to Rosslyn and a pedestrian bridge to Roosevelt Island. The plan concludes with a comprehensive priority list and suggested timeline for short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (4-7 years), and long-term initiatives (8+ years).

Additionally, the transportation appendix provides a more detailed description of transit recommendations in this plan. The public space appendix provides details on examples and ideas that were discussed by the Public Space Working Group during development of the plan, without constituting specific recommendations to the Georgetown 2028 Plan.

Artist's rendering of possible enhancements to make public spaces more inviting.

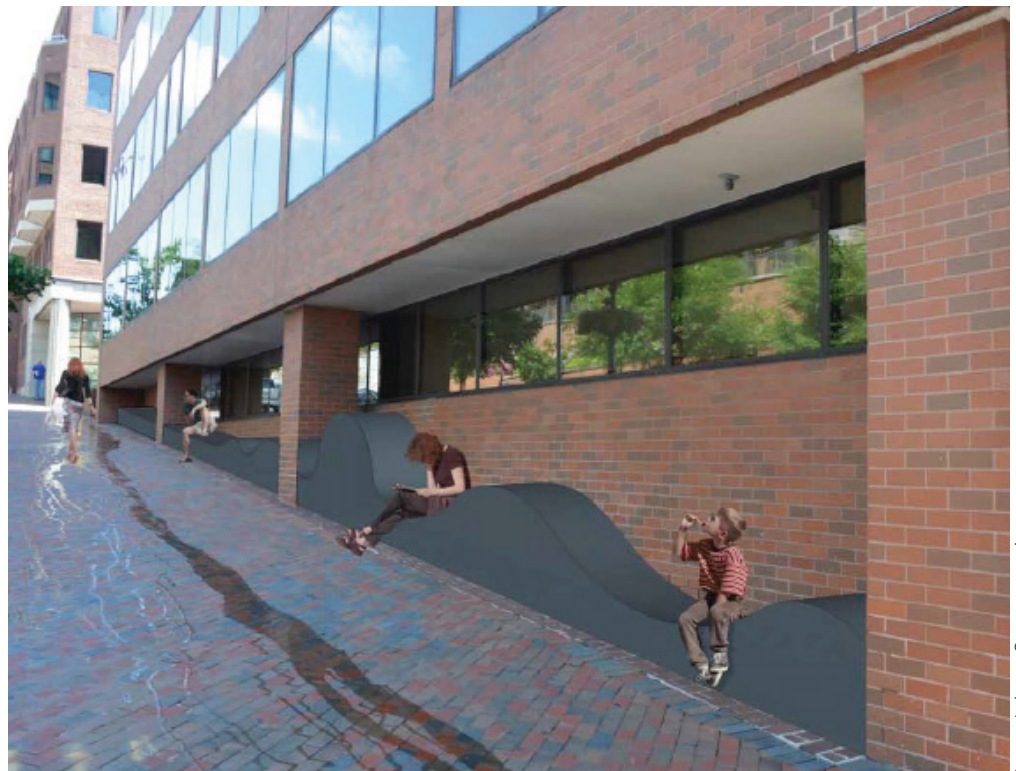


Photo Credit: Public Space Working Group (PSWG)

# Restoring Georgetown's Crown Jewel, the C&O Canal

**T**he Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which begins in Georgetown, may be the single most unique asset in any commercial district in the greater Washington region. Once the lifeblood of Georgetown's industrial era, today it is an active recreational site, with quiet pockets for rest and reflection, that winds past a mix of historic and modern buildings reminding us of Georgetown's rich history.



Budget constraints and deferred maintenance have led to a narrower and uneven towpath on the C&O Canal.

Photo Credit: PSWG



Artist's rendering envisions a C&O Canal full of new social, environmental, recreational and educational activity.

Photo Credit: PSWG

Unfortunately, like many National Parks across the country, the Canal has suffered from cutbacks to the National Park Service budget, and there are no long-term restoration funds for deferred maintenance. The *Georgetown* canal boat, which for 30 years was used for education and historical interpretation, has been decommissioned and its visitor center is only open on summer weekends and holidays – approximately 28 days a year.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions a vibrant C&O Canal Park that attracts residents, office workers, tourists and school children engaged in every activity from paddle boating, jogging and educational outings to just relaxing and enjoying the view. We see an improved Canal that is safer, more accessible, better programmed, better interpreted and better maintained. This vision also recommends that any new activity is balanced with the serenity that so many cherish.

In the future, the C&O Canal will be more interactive and user-friendly. This artist's rendering envisions a wider towpath with seating jutting over the water.



Photo Credit: PSWG

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends that a comprehensive blueprint to restore, preserve and activate the C&O Canal be developed and implemented. The blueprint will articulate a strategy that:

- » Provides a unique attraction to visitors and residents that celebrates Georgetown's history
- » Anchors the identity and activity of a new, revitalized Waterfront District
- » Gives the C&O Canal new life full of social, environmental, recreational and educational activity
- » Ensures that the Canal is a safe, structurally sound environment for future generations

Actions that support this vision include:

- » Launching a stakeholder planning process that engages residents, the National Park Service, C&O Canal-focused non-profit groups, and business interests to plan the future of the Georgetown section of the Canal
- » Demonstrating design ideas with temporary installations, full scale mockups and prototypes that allow the community to quickly respond
- » Executing a fundraising campaign to secure a new Canal boat
- » Planning educational programs centered on the Canal
- » Enhancing the Visitor Center program and expanding its operating hours to support activity along the Canal and throughout Georgetown
- » Installing a public dock to provide recreational paddle boats access to the Georgetown portion of the Canal



# Yes, You've Arrived, Now Where? Enhancing Wayfinding

**A**re we here yet? Many visitors to Georgetown are uncertain where the historic neighborhood actually begins. An improved gateway identification program will remove any uncertainty for shoppers, tourists and visitors that they have entered this special neighborhood.



Photo Credit: Google Earth

K Street is a major, though ordinary, gateway into Georgetown from the east. Below, an artist's rendering suggests a more creative and welcoming entrance to Georgetown.



Photo Credit: PSWG

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions an impactful, yet appropriate, gateway program paired with broader streetscape guidelines that provide signage and other visual design elements that identify the four primary commercial district access points: M Street, K Street, Canal Road/Key Bridge and upper Wisconsin Avenue. This program will reflect Georgetown's historic practice of incorporating a range of design styles into its signage.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends that a gateway program, which reflects the character of the neighborhood, be implemented immediately. This program will focus initially on signage, but also consider:

- » Enhanced landscaping and street furniture that integrates with other streetscape recommendations

Georgetown 2028 recommends that the previously approved signage system from the District of Columbia Department of Transportation's 2003 Georgetown streetscape project be installed immediately. This wayfinding system should be:

- » Considered for expansion throughout the business district to help orient pedestrians and drivers
- » Properly maintained to ensure longevity of the system



Signage systems better direct visitors and tourists to Georgetown destinations.

Photo Credit: PSWG

# Historic and Charming for the 21st Century: Improved Streetscapes for a Better Pedestrian Experience

Red brick sidewalks are a prominent element of Georgetown's historic streetscape. But these sidewalks are often a source of frustration and inconvenience to pedestrians as large light poles reduce useable sidewalk space, uncovered tree boxes make for tricky footing, and bricks that need replacing go untended. Proposals for permanent sidewalk widening on principal corridors have raised concerns over the potential impact on Georgetown's already heavy traffic congestion. Any sidewalk widening efforts should focus on creating space where, and when, it is most needed.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions a pedestrian-friendly streetscape with less obstructed sidewalks that encourage window shopping, or enable slowing down to tie a shoe or look for information on a smartphone. Additionally, as various elements are replaced or added, design would be consistent with new guidelines.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends development of comprehensive streetscape guidelines that include:

- » Standards for tree boxes, sidewalk furniture, street lamps and other elements that can be approved by the governmental entities that regulate Georgetown's appearance
- » A design competition for Georgetown-based professionals to encourage best ideas

**Georgetown 2028 recommends swift action to improve the pedestrian experience by:**

- » Implementing temporary weekend sidewalk-widening pilot projects
- » Installing temporary parklets on commercial side streets
- » Working with merchants to promote broader use of the wider sidewalks on M Street and Pennsylvania Avenue between 28th and 29th Streets
- » Creating active pedestrian links through alleyways, parking lots and side streets
- » Improving the safety and convenience of pedestrian crossings



#### WHAT IS A PARKLET?

A parklet is a curbside parking space or other curbside road segment that is converted to a pedestrian space to provide public seating or another typical sidewalk function. Parklets are distinguished from curb extensions (such as bump outs) because they are situated on a removable platform or on the roadway surface, usually with planters or other barriers providing some buffer from adjacent traffic. Parklets may be installed temporarily for a few hours to several days or permanently.

Photo Credit: M.V. Jantzen, Courtesy of Georgetown Metropolitan





Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

# Keeping Up Appearances... Rejuvenating Wisconsin Avenue

**R**esidents and business owners have long sought to improve the facades and tenant mix along the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Wisconsin Avenue to create a more seamless retail experience linking M Street and Book Hill, which begins in the 1600 block of Wisconsin.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions a shift in the retail mix that better serves Georgetown, including organizing the community to crowdfund the purchase of a building to host a full-service, community-oriented bookstore.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends that the BID organize and support property owners on the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Wisconsin Avenue advocating:

- » Restored and improved building facades
- » More retail that directly serves the neighborhood

The iconic sign from the former Georgetown Theater still beckons on Wisconsin Avenue.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



# A Vibrant Waterfront District South of M Street

The prosperity largely enjoyed along Georgetown's two main retail corridors has also altered its historic profile. Many small boutiques, local independent retailers and restaurants that once populated M Street have moved further up Wisconsin Avenue, its side streets, or have left Georgetown altogether due to high rents and changes in the way buildings are owned and managed. National chains and high-end retailers have diversified Georgetown's offerings and created a rent differential along the main corridors that can make the commercial district below M Street more appealing to retailers and independent restaurants that want to be in Georgetown – creating a vibrant Waterfront District.

The landscape below M Street has already started changing, with the opening of the Waterfront Park adjacent to the Washington Harbour and the seasonal installation of an ice skating rink. When the new streetcar route begins operation along K Street, likely before 2020, droves of visitors will disembark by the Waterfront before making their way to other points in the neighborhood. This creates an opportunity to further revamp K Street and energize the adjacent north-south streets into a new retail hub.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions extending the retail district onto the north-south streets – like Thomas Jefferson and 31st Streets – that connect M and K Streets and onto K Street where there would be new, distinctive spaces for retailers and restaurants with potentially lower rents to add desired alternatives to the neighborhood's commercial mix.

Artist's rendering of a vibrant K Street, envisioned before the streetcar begins operation.



Photo Credit: PSWG

A major north-south corridor connecting M and K streets, 31st Street is more welcoming with pedestrian-friendly amenities, as shown in this artist's rendering.



Photo Credit: PSWG

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends creation of a Waterfront District, between M Street and the Potomac River, encouraging new retail, restaurants and programming on the north-south connecting streets and along K Street. Steps to create this pedestrian-friendly Waterfront District include:

- » Fostering the creation and occupancy of space for retailers and restaurateurs
- » Engaging DDOT to study traffic flow on north-south streets to make enhancements that support commercial and residential activities
- » Making the north-south connectors pedestrian friendly
- » Creating spaces of interest in natural nooks and crannies to improve the pedestrian experience
- » Piloting temporary and semi-permanent parklets adjacent to retail and restaurants
- » Expanding pedestrian zones, where appropriate, and highlight thresholds with alleyways and the C&O Canal
- » Integrating streetscape improvements that accentuate visual connections between K Street and the Waterfront with M Street
- » Implementing strategies to reduce office vacancies
- » Initiating new programming and amenities appropriate to a mixed-use commercial area
- » Facilitating major transportation improvements, anchored by the new streetcar line on K Street

Actions to support this vision include:

- » Adding seating and activities along these pathways to encourage lingering
- » Improving lighting to make the area feel safer and friendlier
- » Creating a range of daily or weekend programming that might include a public art program, markets and historic programming, such as a Heritage Trail
- » Exploring artistic installations and lighting under the Whitehurst Freeway



# Invigorating the Retail and Restaurant Landscape

A smattering of restaurants and shops now line the north-south streets, mostly north of the canal. Further restaurant growth has been inhibited for a number of reasons, including a scarcity of restaurant-ready spaces, and a liquor license policy that incentivizes property owners to hold licenses, even when they have not had an operating restaurant for years.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions a Waterfront District that includes converting the ground floor of office buildings into new restaurant or retail space along the north-south thruways and along K Street.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends an active program of recruiting property owners to create new retail and restaurant space, and freeing up liquor licenses for use in the Waterfront District. Specific action steps include:

- » Actively organizing brokers, tenants and property owners to invest in converting ground floor spaces south of M Street into space for new shops and restaurants, giving great care to adjacent residential properties
- » Facilitating conversations between brokers, tenants and property owners of large, persistently vacant, spaces to use as locales for “pop-up” or temporary stores or “market-style” retail incubators that quickly bring a retail presence to the area
- » Initiating a collaborative effort with the ANC, Alcohol Beverage Regulation Administration and the D.C. Council to implement policies that prevent speculatively holding liquor licenses in safekeeping for indefinite periods

Outdoor dining, left, along the C&O Canal at the Capella hotel.

Georgetown’s charming nooks and crannies become more inviting spots to linger at tables and chairs in this artist’s rendering, right.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



Photo Credit: PSWG



# Filling Vacant Offices

The office vacancy rate in Georgetown's business district is chronically higher than in many other D.C. submarkets, even though the average office rent remains among the lowest in the region. Part of the reason is that a high proportion of Georgetown's office stock is class B or C, has not been renovated for energy efficiency and doesn't offer standard layouts. More than 80 percent of the neighborhood's commercial office space is south of M Street, so focusing on this area has great potential to alter the economic landscape. Encouraging investment in properties and aggressively marketing to tech and other creative businesses, identified in the District's economic development strategy to locate in Georgetown, can decrease the office vacancy rate. The dramatic transportation improvements proposed in this plan also will benefit the office market.

Georgetown's historic ambience attracts creative companies looking for unique office space in the nation's capital.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions converting ground floor office space to restaurant and retail space to reduce total vacancy, stimulate investment in property and make Georgetown's office buildings more attractive to younger entrepreneurs and workers seeking mixed use, amenity-rich office locations.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends aligning investment and marketing efforts with D.C. government development priorities to decrease office vacancy.

The action plan to implement this strategy includes:

- » Integrating Georgetown into the District's efforts to promote growth in the technology and creative sectors
- » Developing strategies to recruit start-up and creative businesses that seek innovative office spaces
- » Conducting a feasibility study to provide high-speed internet fiber to office buildings south of M Street to further attract technology-dependent businesses
- » Engaging local and federal agencies to identify incentives for building renovations that increase efficiency and environmental sustainability

# A Better Connected Georgetown: Improving the Transit Experience

**A**ny plan for Georgetown's future must tackle transportation. Whether it is the lack of a Metro station, traffic gridlock, unreliable bus service or limited parking access, existing transportation obstacles can be hard on the 29,000 people who work in Georgetown, the 16,000 residents and millions of annual visitors.

For Georgetown to continue to thrive, major investment is needed to reliably get people here, and ensure ease of transportation around the neighborhood or when they are leaving. Georgetown is well positioned to improve. Its walkable street grid and proximity to other neighborhoods makes it a beneficiary of D.C.'s trend toward walking, biking, and transit.

But that is only a start. A neighborhood better connected to the District and the region must have transportation options that are efficient, reliable and respectful of the historic character of the neighborhood.

This second section concentrates on specific recommendations to improve every aspect of Georgetown transportation, from a new Metro station, streetcar and aerial gondola, to small, yet critically important steps that improve access for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and drivers.



## GEORGETOWN'S MISSED METRO OPPORTUNITY

There is a myth that widespread neighborhood opposition to a Georgetown Metro Station led WMATA planners to eliminate Georgetown from the original Metro map that was laid out in the 1960s. While there was dissent from some in the business and residential communities, a Georgetown Station was never seriously considered by Metro planners who deemed station construction here too challenging given engineering and construction techniques at the time, and less of a priority than connecting other parts of the city.

Today, a united Georgetown community enthusiastically supports a Georgetown Metro Station.



# The Gamechanger: Metro – at Last

**M**ajor investments are about to be made to the region's world-class subway system, including plans to address a key chokepoint in the system – the tunnel beneath the Potomac River that connects Rosslyn to the District. This tunnel's capacity is strained already; a situation that will only worsen once Metro's Silver Line begins operation. To improve the transit system's capacity, long-term plans include a second tunnel for a separated Blue Line to run between Rosslyn and the District with a Metro station in Georgetown.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions the metro opportunity as a significant game-changer, easing dependency on private automobiles and buses to get to and from the neighborhood.

**ACTION** **Georgetown 2028 recommends bringing Metro to Georgetown by 2028, accelerating WMATA's planned construction of the new tunnel.** To achieve this goal:

- » Georgetown stakeholders must organize and launch a coordinated advocacy campaign with other beneficiaries of the separated Blue Line
- » Campaign organizers will work to accelerate planning and construction of the new Metro station

This map envisions a second Blue Line that could include two Metro stops in Georgetown: one near Georgetown University and another close to the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and M Street.

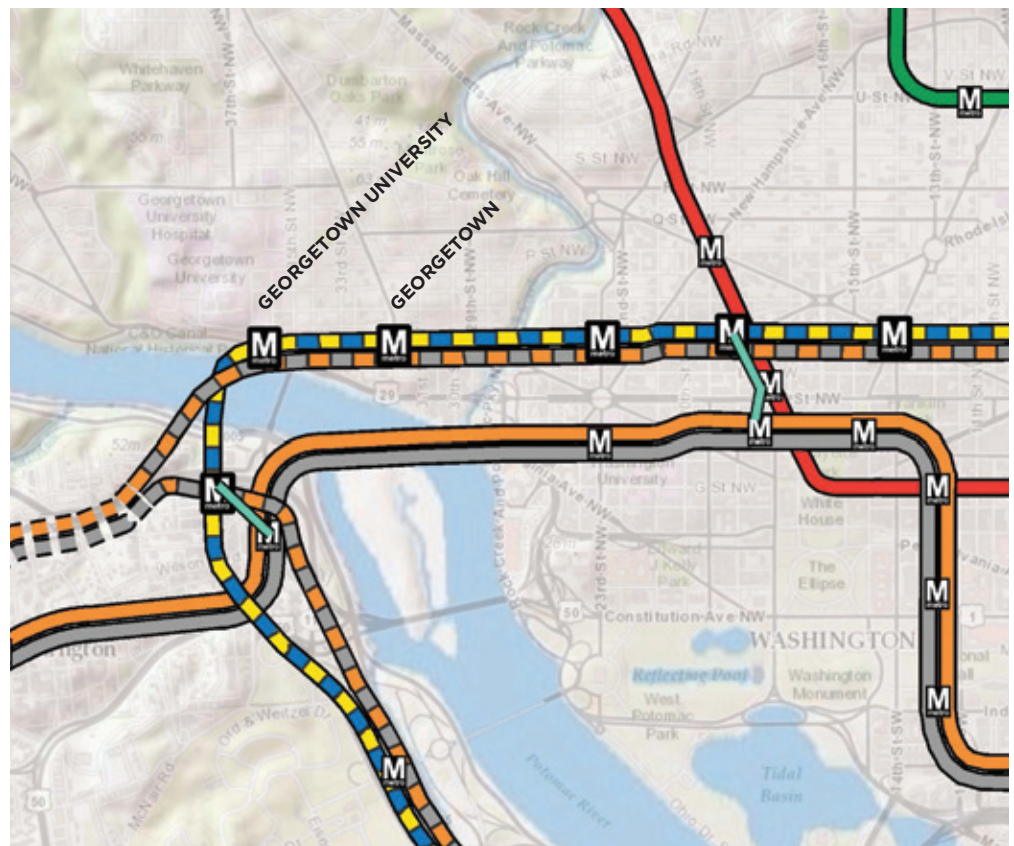


Photo Credit: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority – Metro

# A Streetcar to the Georgetown Waterfront

**T**he next phase of the District's plans for a revitalized streetcar system includes a direct line between Georgetown and Union Station before 2020.

The latest (October 2013) plan, calls for the streetcar to enter Georgetown via K Street with a stop near Wisconsin Avenue. A streetcar that provides a fast and efficient link to Georgetown will greatly improve accessibility, while anchoring the emerging Waterfront District transportation hub.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions a fast and reliable streetcar that runs on a frequent schedule – possibly in a dedicated lane. A streetcar stuck in traffic or behind a parked delivery truck is no better than traveling to Georgetown in an automobile or on a public bus.

**ACTION** **Georgetown 2028 recommends a streetcar program that ensures a fast, reliable connection to Georgetown.** To secure streetcar efficiency and a successful program, the BID will:

- » Help form a Georgetown Streetcar Partnership with interested stakeholders to advocate for reliable and efficient service
- » Support its partners conducting a feasibility study to extend the streetcar line to Georgetown University, and possibly beyond to other transit destinations
- » Work to integrate the streetcar program with strategies to enliven K Street and create an expanded retail corridor between M and K streets



## BENEFITS OF BRINGING A STREETCAR TO GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Together, Georgetown University and the Medstar Georgetown University Hospital are larger than any other private employer in the District. The campus population already is heavily oriented toward transit use, so extending the streetcar to the University would guarantee it a reliable customer base. The University might also be able to offer a maintenance and storage facility, essential support infrastructure that has been practically and politically difficult to locate along this line.

Photo Credit: PSWG



# Gondola Access with a View

Even with a fast and reliable streetcar connection, Georgetown will still require better access to Metro and other regional links until a neighborhood station opens. A gondola lift has emerged as one of the most attractive options to quickly connect Georgetown's commercial district with the nearby Rosslyn Metro station. Georgetown University would also benefit from a gondola lift, as its campus shuttle confronts slower travel times and service reliability along increasingly congested routes.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions riders enjoying a hassle-free, four-minute ride that whisks them across the Potomac River as they savor the aerial and skyline views.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends a feasibility study on the construction, costs, and operation of an aerial gondola to provide a fast, reliable and picturesque transit link between the Rosslyn Metro Station and the Georgetown commercial district and Georgetown University.

» If found technically and financially feasible, a community planning process would be initiated to determine next steps leading to construction of the gondola

## WHAT IS A GONDOLA LIFT?

A gondola lift consists of a loop cable between two stations with individual cabins accommodating anywhere from four to 20 passengers. The cabins move along the cable between the two stations. Sometimes there are intermediate supporting towers. The cable, known as the haul rope, moves continuously, driven by a bullwheel that is powered by an electric motor in one of the end terminals.

A gondola lift can carry more than 4,000 passengers in each direction, per hour, similar to light rail transit and much larger than a typical bus route running at five-minute intervals. Because of its efficiency and reasonable construction costs, gondolas are being used in cities across the globe to tackle urban transit challenges. Gondolas are now operating in London (2012), Caracas (2010), Medellin, Colombia (2004) and Portland, Oregon (2006). A citywide system has been proposed in Austin, Texas. Modern gondolas are bike-friendly and comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

# Transforming K Street to a Successful Gateway

The once industrial Georgetown waterfront has undergone a transformation in recent years and again become a popular destination with the completion of the Waterfront Park, the opening of the Washington Harbour ice skating rink, and new restaurants and music venues on Water Street. Getting here without an automobile also has become easier, with Circulator bus service on K Street, increased water taxi services and new Capital Bikeshare stations. When Streetcar service arrives by 2020, access will dramatically increase along with demand for more services and amenities.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions transforming K Street into a successful Georgetown gateway by integrating all of these transportation options into a well-designed system that serves the new Waterfront District, and the M Street and Wisconsin Avenue commercial streets with improved transit, pedestrian connections and more bicycle-friendly pathways.



Photo Credit: PSWG

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends initiatives to better connect K Street, including:

- » Supporting ongoing growth at the waterfront for water taxi services, including routes to the National Mall and Ronald Reagan National Airport
- » Improving and consolidating commuter shuttle services from nearby Metro stations to Georgetown office locations
- » Developing a taxi stand to serve the Waterfront District
- » Examining the feasibility of a limited-access vehicle crossing the Canal at 33rd Street to facilitate emergency evacuation, special event management, and a bicycle link that does not require dismounting
- » Advocating for pedestrian and bicycle enhancements and improved Canal crossings at Potomac Street, 33rd Street, 34th Street and further west



Artist's rendering of a transformed K Street, creating a welcoming gateway to Georgetown.

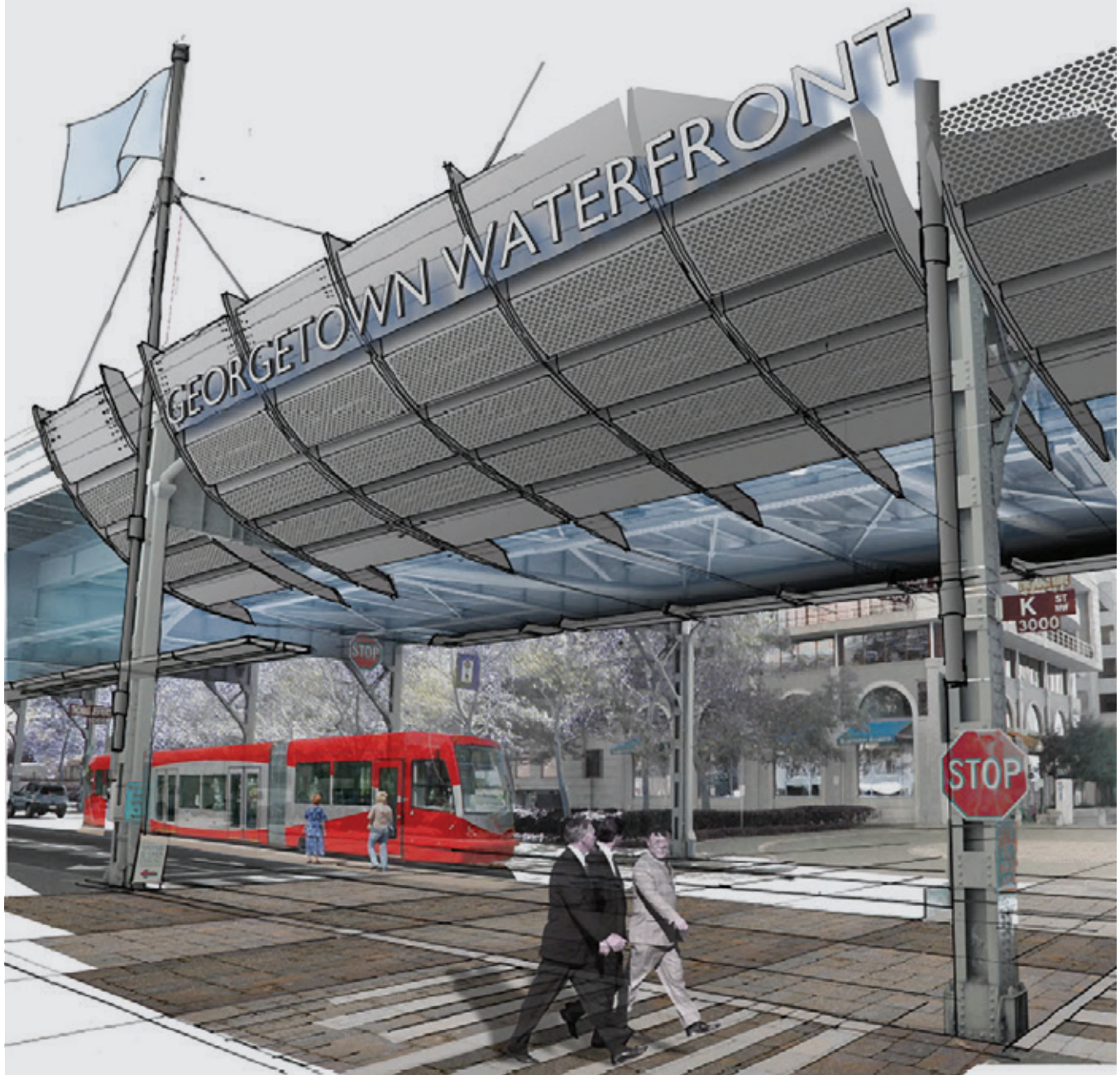


Photo Credit: PSWG

# Establish Georgetown as a Bicycle-Friendly Destination

**G**eorgetown is a natural destination for bicyclists with the convergence of high quality trails, a growing network of bikeshare stations, and proximity to universities, tourist attractions and the central business district. Whether commuting to work or exercising, bicycle enhancements will improve Georgetown's physical and perceptual connection to the city and the region.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions leveraging the neighborhood's position as a bicycle center, including four top-rated bicycle shops, to attract more retail customers and commuters while reducing vehicle congestion.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends positioning the neighborhood as a premier destination for bicycle trips, whether for recreational rides, commutes to and from work, or for tourist visits. Steps to position Georgetown as a bicycle destination include:

- » Connecting bicycle facilities that currently bring cyclists only to the edge of the commercial district
- » Implementing a high quality bike connection between the Capital Crescent Trail and Rock Creek Parkway Trail, such as adding a cycletrack on Water and K Streets.
- » Expanding bicycle parking by installing in-street bike corrals throughout commercial areas just off of main corridors
- » Improving bikesharing options by identifying at least four new locations for Capital Bikeshare stations in the commercial district

Georgetown's scenic C&O Canal attracts bicyclists, left. The bike lanes, or cycle tracks, right, popping up in the city are coming to Georgetown.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



# Studying a Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge to Roosevelt Island

It is ironic that the 86-acre Theodore Roosevelt Island Memorial Park is located in the District of Columbia but can only be accessed through the Commonwealth of Virginia. Building a pedestrian/bicycle bridge would provide a direct Georgetown link to this serene outdoor attraction, making it more easily accessible to residents and visitors. Continuing this connection into Virginia would weave the National Park Service trails north and south of the Potomac River into a high-functioning unified system.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions an iconic bike/pedestrian bridge that easily connects Washington, D.C. with its unique Roosevelt Island asset. The bridge's world-class design and its beautiful view of the river and vistas would make it a destination in its own right.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends that construction of a pedestrian/bicycle bridge, connecting Roosevelt Island with the Georgetown waterfront and Virginia, as well as other possible connections, be studied, while giving consideration to:

- » The agreement with the Theodore Roosevelt Association that conveyed the island
- » The impact on waterfront viewsheds, history, cultural and natural resources
- » The current prohibition of bicycles on the island
- » The opportunities and utility a new bridge would provide

An example of a pedestrian bridge, left, in Bilbao, Spain. A plan view, right, illustrating one possible alignment to connect Georgetown, Roosevelt Island and Virginia.



Photo Credit: Lig Ynnek, cc Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0



Photo Credit: PSWG



# Better Roadway and Parking Management

**M**uch driver frustration is focused on M Street, or when exiting K Street, especially during congested evening rush hours and on weekends. There are many opportunities to ease driver frustration by improving roadway management, communication and enforcement. Improved signage, lane configuration, signal timing in intersections and enforcement of traffic laws for moving violations will all help reduce traffic problems and perceptions that effect Georgetown's commercial district while also improving transit and the pedestrian experience.

**VISION** Georgetown 2028 envisions the driver experience made better through improved roadway configuration, management and enforcement.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends that a series of steps be taken to reduce driver frustration, including:

- » Positioning traffic control officers at major intersections during congested times to prevent gridlock and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and motorists
- » Examining changes to the Glover Park roadway configuration to address persistent congestion on Wisconsin Avenue, which would also improve public transit reliability
- » Improving traffic flow at the 29th and K Street intersection to allow direct evening rush hour access to Rock Creek Parkway
- » Deploying automated enforcement cameras to prevent red-light running and blocking of intersections
- » Studying the intersections at both ends of the Whitehurst Freeway to identify ways to improve traffic flow and ease pressure on M Street, particularly during the evening rush hour and on weekends
- » Examining how changes to traffic signal timing, crosswalk adjustments and lane availability could improve traffic flow and increase safety at the Canal Road/ M Street/Key Bridge intersections



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

## TRANSPORTATION

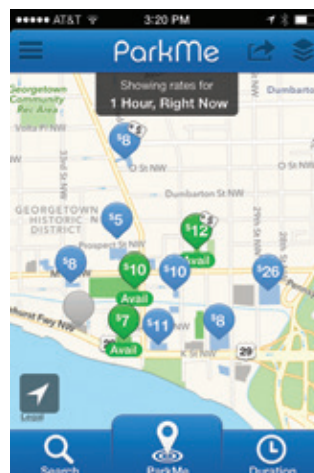
Considerable congestion is caused by vehicles cruising for street parking spots in lieu of heading directly to a Georgetown parking garage. Drivers who are searching for a parking spot are less efficient and safety conscious than people focused on driving to a known destination. Thoughtful parking management is essential in Georgetown where the commercial district shares limited parking and roadway space with surrounding neighborhood blocks. Neighbors also have strong concerns about spillover commercial traffic and parking.

**VISION** Georgetown 2028 envisions active parking management, including improved communication on underused parking resources. This will reduce conflicts between commercial and residential interests reduce frustrating parking tickets and the congestion associated with searching for street parking. Parking management will enable visitors to make informed choices about parking price, time and proximity trade-offs.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends a coordinated parking management strategy that includes:

- » Coordinating and sharing off-street parking resources based on complementary usage patterns (such as daily commuters, residential parking at night and weekend visitors)
- » Implementing shuttle or transit services to and from off-street parking facilities
- » Managing on-street parking in the commercial district through enhanced pricing and hourly limits to make curb parking available to customers who most need fast, short-term options
- » Improving information for parking availability through smart phone apps, online resources and electronic signage consistent with historic district constraints
- » Identifying and pursuing shared parking opportunities for upper Wisconsin Avenue by coordinating with nearby facilities, such as banks or schools, for retail use in off hours
- » Considering other proposals to expand parking options if the coordinated parking strategy leads to persistently full garages

Apps designed to make parking easier would be welcomed by local and out-of-town visitors to Georgetown.



# Increasing the Efficiency – and Usage – of Bus Service

Several bus routes serve Georgetown including two Circulator and eight Metrobus routes. However, buses frequently encounter the same traffic congestion as everyone else, reducing reliability and therefore ridership. Additionally, many residents and visitors find the systems confusing and difficult to use.

**VISION** The Georgetown 2028 plan envisions a more reliable, efficient and user-friendly bus system that residents and visitors will favor using.

**ACTION** Georgetown 2028 recommends strategic action to improve the quality, reliability, efficiency and public understanding of these transit systems.

Significant improvement in Georgetown bus reliability and speed are essential. To achieve this goal:

- » Assess a full range of options for improving the speed and reliability of bus service within Georgetown
- » Prioritize actions with the greatest benefit, taking into account potential impacts on spillover parking and traffic
- » Identify and advocate for bus enhancements outside of Georgetown that will improve the reliability of service in the neighborhood
- » Adjust the Glover Park roadway configuration to improve throughput
- » Shorten the 30s bus routes to end in the commercial business district and improve arrival information
- » Decouple the Wisconsin Avenue and Union Station Circulator routes
- » Consider Circulator routing enhancements along Wisconsin Avenue
- » Create more welcoming spaces for people waiting for a bus, consistent with Georgetown's historic heritage
- » Implement a pilot program that provides real-time bus arrival information on small digital screens in businesses adjacent to major bus stops. If successful, the program would be expanded to all feasible bus stops
- » Launch a pilot program testing tip-based, small electric vehicle shuttles for rides within Georgetown and to/from nearby Metro stations
- » Study the feasibility of a free hop-on hop-off shuttle circulating Georgetown, nearby Metro stations and parking garages; implement if feasible



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID



# Financing the Georgetown 2028 Vision

**W**e realize that significant new investment is required to advance the Georgetown 2028 recommendations, especially in transportation infrastructure. However, only some recommendations require new funding. Certain projects will be funded using commitments under appropriate existing government programs. Others will be funded through a combination of new government appropriations, private partnerships and the BID's annual and capital budgets.

Transportation cost estimates are included for each of the projects in the appendix. Recommendations that require funding fall into five financing categories:

## WHAT IS A TIF?

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a public financing tool used to fund infrastructure and economic development projects. Infrastructure and economic development projects expand the city's tax base by creating new business opportunities. The change between the present tax base and the future tax base is called the tax increment. TIF allows the government (and its partners) to borrow against this future tax increment. TIF does not levy new taxes, nor does it change the tax rate: it simply allows future tax revenues to be spent today.

- » **Ongoing Government Programs:** Many recommendations describe current D.C. government commitments or responsibilities that have not yet been fulfilled. The BID will work with appropriate government agencies to ensure these responsibilities are met.
- » **Appropriate for Government Funding:** Some projects fit into existing government programs and are the government's responsibility, even though funding may not exist in current budgets. The BID and its partners will advocate for suitable funding during the District's annual budget process. In addition, we will advocate for dedicated funding for public infrastructure improvements from sources such as a Georgetown Retail Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District.
- » **Public-Private Partnerships:** Projects in this category require meaningful contributions from both government and non-government partners. For example, this could involve the BID and individual businesses funding a feasibility study, with subsequent capital funding coming from a combination of the District government and project-based funding.
- » **Private Funding:** Some projects are not appropriate for government support and will require private funding. Private funders may include individual businesses, institutions, the BID or some combination of partners.
- » **BID Leadership:** While the BID budget is unable to support major infrastructure projects or operating investments such as public transit subsidies, the BID can provide in-kind contributions such as BID staff time to coordinate action. In some cases, relatively small amounts of BID capital and operating funds will be spent to demonstrate or launch an idea.

# Georgetown 2028: A Living Agenda

When community members, merchants, property owners and other stakeholders were asked to discuss their ideas and concerns, almost every conversation started with or circled back to transportation issues. The recommendations in this plan will lead to significant and exciting economic development and mobility improvements that will anchor a dramatically improved Georgetown experience.

All of the Georgetown 2028 recommendations demand informed analysis and follow-up to shape an evolving action agenda for the future.

To ensure thoughtful analysis of these proposals, the BID plans to join other community stakeholders to conduct a 2018 near-term review of pilot programs and studies, followed by a 2020 mid-term review of priorities for the use of space along our major corridors, particularly following the implementation of new public transportation options. The 2020 study also will be informed by whether decisions have been made on a Georgetown Metro stop.

The BID will act with other community stakeholders to lead the process to update the transportation action agenda based on these ongoing assessments. The BID will also continue its ongoing research work to help better understand who works, lives, shops, visits and travels through Georgetown. This will be published in the BID's annual *State of Georgetown*.



More than 200 people participated at several community engagement meetings to share ideas for Georgetown's future.

Photo Credit: Georgetown BID







# Next Steps and an Action Plan

**T**he Action Agenda resulting from this Georgetown 2028 Plan places 75 items on our collective 'to-do' list. The action items are at once ambitious and achievable – given sufficient resources, time, commitment and leadership.

The following chart reflects the priorities of the Georgetown 2028 Task Force and its working groups, and the BID staff's recommendations on what can be reasonably launched in any given period. Over the course of the next three years, the Georgetown BID, working with neighborhood and citywide partners, will tackle action items in the Plan's three areas of focus: economic development, public space and transportation.

All this raises the inevitable question: how will success be measured? One way will be to measure how many of the action items are accomplished. Another will be to assess how well new programs or enhancements are working. We can also measure how well the economic indicators, such as vacancy rates and sales, in Georgetown are performing relative to 2013 when we started this process. Finally, we will need to evaluate how well we are working together as a community to implement the action items, respond to changing conditions, priorities or opportunities, and improve the plan as needed.



The Georgetown 2028 Action Plan sets the agenda for the BID's work alongside community and city partners over the next 15 years.

Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

This Action Agenda will be the basis for much of the Georgetown BID's work in the coming years. The BID will use this plan to develop its five-year renewal plan in 2014, anticipating that BID staffing and budget decisions will align with the 2028 action items it is agreeing to spearhead. For more information about items in the Action Agenda, refer to the appendices. This is where you will find much greater details, background materials, and additional information on the recommendations from the three working groups.



Photo Credit: Georgetown BID

# Georgetown

## 2028 Action Agenda

★ PRIORITY EFFORT FOR BID STAFF  
MAJOR MILESTONES IN 3, 7 AND/OR 15 YEARS

PRIORITY MILESTONES

### Canal: Restore, preserve, and activate the C&O Canal

1	Launch a multi-stakeholder planning process for the Canal's future	★	3		
2	Fundraise for a new canal barge	★	3	7	
3	Demonstrate new programs, activities and designs for public feedback		3	7	15
4	Supplement and enhance the NPS Visitor Center to support more activity		3		
5	Design educational programs that inform the public about the Canal		3		
6	Implement Canal plan and well received demonstration project			7	15

### Wayfinding: Enhance visitor's sense of arrival and ease of navigation

7	Install previously approved wayfinding system from DDOT	★	3		
8	Explore physical and mobile expansions for wayfinding in commercial areas	★	3		
9	Develop and implement a gateway strategy for major access points to the commercial district		3		

### Improved streetscapes: Maintain a historic and charming character in the 21st Century

10	Develop design and material guidelines for street furniture and landscaping	★	3		
11	Pilot temporary sidewalk widening programs	★	3		
12	Identify and improve pedestrian choke points on commercial corridors	★	3	7	
13	Create active pedestrian links through alleyways and side streets	★	3	7	15
14	Install parklets on commercial side streets	★	3	7	
15	Improve the safety and convenience of pedestrian crossings		3	7	15
16	Improve pedestrian connections between Georgetown University and M Street		3	7	15

### Wisconsin Avenue renewal: Foster engaging retail activity from M Street to Book Hill

17	Create a forum for property owners on 1300 and 1400 block to plan for the future	★	3	7	
18	Establish a community-owned building for a bookstore	★	3		

### Waterfront District: Develop new retail, restaurants and programs south of M Street

19	Create frequent, recurring programs that promote streetlife	★	3		
20	Explore policies to limit the holding of liquor licenses in safekeeping	★	3		
21	Pilot parklets adjacent to retailers and restaurants	★	3	7	
22	Promote the conversion of ground floor space into retail and restaurant destinations	★	3	7	15
23	Improve and expand pedestrian connections between M Street and K Street	★	3	7	15
24	Leverage small public spaces for seating, public art and games		3		
25	Explore artistic installations and lighting that add interest to Whitehurst Freeway and Key Bridge		3		
26	Improve street and bridge lighting to enhance safety		3	7	
27	Integrate streetscape improvements with major transit initiatives		3	7	15

### Office vacancy: Align with D.C. government development priorities

28	Integrate Georgetown into District's tech sector initiatives	★	3		
29	Conduct a feasibility study on ubiquitous wi-fi and high-speed internet	★	3		
30	Market unique office stock to start-up and creative companies		3		
31	Identify incentives for building renovations that increase sustainability		3	7	

### A Better Connected Georgetown: Improving the Transportation Experience

32	Bring a Metro Station to Georgetown by 2028	★	3	7	15
33	Bring fast and reliable downtown streetcar service to the Georgetown Waterfront	★	3	7	
34	Study and potentially construct a gondola lift linking Georgetown to Metro	★	3	7	
35	Form a Georgetown Streetcar Partnership to coordinate advocacy		3		
36	Explore streetcar extensions west to Georgetown University and beyond		3	7	15



PRIORITY MILESTONES

**Transforming K Street into a Successful Gateway**

37	Study a bicycle/pedestrian bridge connecting Georgetown with Rosslyn via Roosevelt Island	★	3	7	15
38	Support more water taxi service through better dock management		3		
39	Pilot a taxi stand to serve the Waterfront District		3		
40	Coordinate commuter shuttle services from nearby Metro stations		3	7	
41	Examine limited-access vehicle crossing and other connections to Water Street		3	7	15
42	Improve the safety and ease of walking to/from Foggy Bottom Metro		3	7	15

**Establish Georgetown as a Bicycle Friendly Destination**

43	Connect Capital Crescent Trail with Rock Creek Parkway trail on or beside K/Water Streets	★	3		
44	Install in-street bicycle parking corrals throughout commercial areas	★	3		
45	Connect bikeways on Georgetown's periphery all the way into Georgetown	★	3	7	
46	Install at least 4 new Capital Bikeshare stations in commercial area		3		

**Better Roadway Management**

47	Allow direct evening rush hour access to Rock Creek Parkway from K Street	★	3		
48	Improve the performance of the Canal Road, M Street, Key Bridge intersection	★	3		
49	Improve the performance of intersections at the ends of the Whitehurst Freeway	★	3	7	
50	Position traffic control officers at major intersections	★	3		
51	Improve Wisconsin Avenue road allocation in Glover Park to reduce congestion and improve safety		3		
52	Deploy automated enforcement cameras to improve flow and safety		3		
53	Assess and improve signal timing for safety and efficiency of all modes		3		
54	Evaluate and adapt the use of existing peak period lanes to improve efficiency		3		
55	Establish routine meetings with traffic control officers and MPD to prioritize enforcement		3	7	15

**Better Parking Management**

56	Use pricing and hourly limits to improve availability of commercial on-street parking	★	3		
57	Improve information on parking availability	★	3		
58	Coordinate off-street parking resources to make off-peak capacity available	★	3	7	
59	Improve the design and enforcement of loading zones		3		
60	Implement shuttle services to and from off-street parking facilities		3	7	
61	Improve motorcycle and motor scooter parking		3	7	
62	Improve tour bus parking options		3	7	
63	Study new parking options if management of existing supply is inadequate		7	15	

**Increasing the Efficiency and Usage of Bus Service**

64	Pilot a real-time bus arrival information system	★	3		
65	Advocate changes outside Georgetown to improve efficiency of Georgetown routes	★	3	7	
66	Study options to improve bus speed and reliability within Georgetown	★	3	7	15
67	Study a free hop-on/hop-off shuttle option within Georgetown and to Metro	★	3		
68	Adjust Circulator and Metrobus routing to improve efficiency and reliability		3		
69	Pilot tip-based small electric vehicle shuttles		3		
70	Create more welcoming places for people waiting for the bus		3	7	

**Ongoing Data and Analysis and Promotion**

71	Assess commercial corridors and other considerations in light of streetcar and Metro status	★	7		
72	Survey Georgetown visitors to understand travel preferences and behavior		3		
73	Identify plan actions that would be impacted by Whitehurst Freeway deconstruction		3		
74	Develop Georgetown program promoting alternatives to single occupant car travel		3		
75	Conduct ongoing review of Georgetown 2028 pilot & feasibility studies and take appropriate steps		7		

The Transportation and Public Space appendices are not printed but are important parts of Georgetown 2028. They are available in pdf form on the BID's website at [georgetowndc.com/Georgetown2028](http://georgetowndc.com/Georgetown2028).

# Community Support for Georgetown 2028



## ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2E

"ANC 2E is pleased to add its voice to those of others in our community in support of the broad scope and creative thinking embodied in the plan initiated by the Georgetown Business Improvement District (BID) and formed in collaboration with a wide range of representatives of the business, residential and university sectors of Georgetown, including ANC 2E. We applaud the BID and all who have participated for the inclusiveness and productivity of that process and we look forward to further involvement in continuing that collaborative spirit in the implementation of elements of the plan as appropriate, as the individual components of 'Georgetown 2028' are brought for review before the ANC and other city agencies."

— Resolution adopted unanimously at the ANC 2E public meeting on Dec. 19, 2013



## GEORGETOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

"The GBA is pleased to participate in this initiative and looks forward to having the opportunity to continue to work and collaborate with other members of the Georgetown community as Georgetown 2028 moves forward. The GBA Board conducted an e-vote, overwhelmingly approving a motion to endorse the Georgetown 2028 Plan and Transportation Appendix that the Task Force adopted and that the Georgetown BID Board endorsed."

— Riyad Said, President GBA



## GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

"Georgetown University has been pleased to partner with the Georgetown BID and other members of the Georgetown community to develop the Georgetown 2028 Plan. We strongly endorse the vision of Georgetown 2028, particularly the transportation solutions for Georgetown, and we look forward to working with our partners to bring to reality a plan that will benefit the University, the Georgetown commercial district, and the historic residential neighborhood."

— Statement from Georgetown University



## CITIZENS ASSOCIATION OF GEORGETOWN

"CAG was pleased to take part in this critical project. Throughout the many meetings of the working groups and task force, a solid relationship of mutual respect between the business community, CAG and the other groups represented – including the ANC, Georgetown University, the National Park Service and Arlington County – ensured open and productive discussions on the future of the neighborhood."

Some ideas generated by the report are bold and extremely ambitious. Recognizing that all significant improvements contemplated by the report will proceed through the ordinary regulatory approval process, CAG strongly endorses the overall objectives of the report. Through a continuing productive relationship many of the more ambitious recommendations of the report will receive the support of CAG and the residents of Georgetown. CAG looks forward to working closely with the BID and all relevant stakeholders in continuing this cooperative spirit in order to achieve the goals of the report."

— Excerpt from Endorsement adopted unanimously by the CAG Board on Dec. 18, 2013



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