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## Rock Creek East Area Element

### OVERVIEW 2200

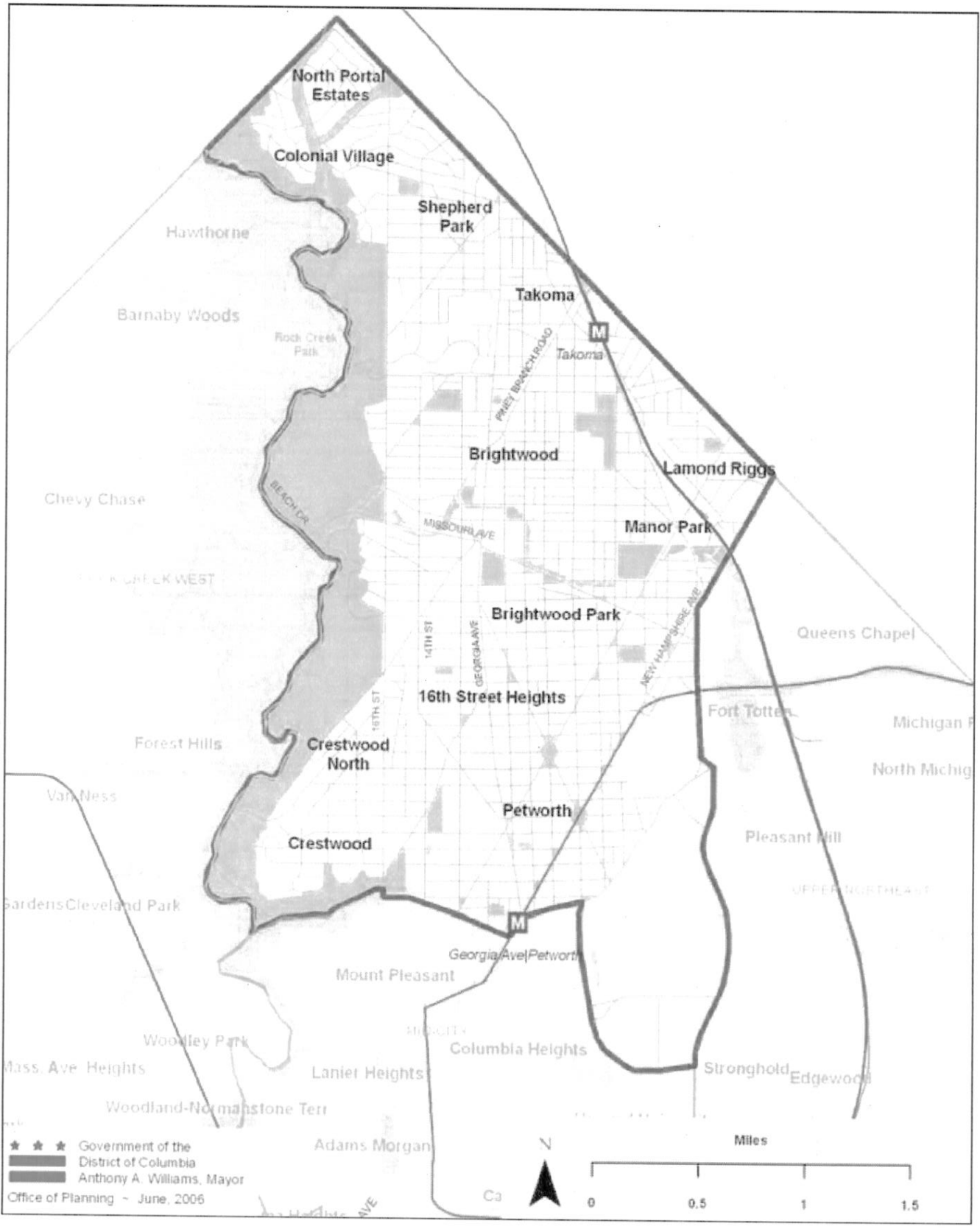
The Rock Creek East Planning Area encompasses the 7.1 square miles located east of Rock Creek Park, west of North Capitol Street and north of Spring Road NW. It also includes the Armed Forces Retirement Home and the Irving Street Hospital Center Complex. Its boundaries are shown in the Map at left. Most of this area has historically been Council Ward 4 although in past and present times, parts have been included in Ward 5. 2200.1

Rock Creek East is an attractive residential community containing many stable low and moderate density neighborhoods. Single family communities like North Portal Estates, Colonial Village, Crestwood, Carter Barron East, Shepherd Park, 16th Street Heights, and Takoma are known for their park-like ambiance, sense of community, open spaces, and family atmosphere. Row house and semi-detached neighborhoods such as Lamond Riggs, Brightwood, Brightwood Park, Petworth, and Manor Park have similar positive qualities. The major planning objective throughout the community is to conserve these traits as the housing stock matures and infill development occurs. 2200.2

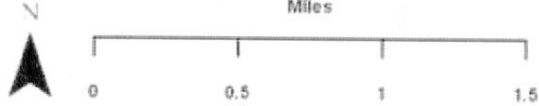
Georgia Avenue is the commercial heart of this Planning Area, with local shops that serve the adjacent neighborhoods. There are also small shopping districts in Takoma, near 14th Street and Colorado Avenue, along Kennedy Street, along Upshur near 3rd Street, and along 14th Street between Allison and Decatur Streets. Other major employment centers in the area include the Irving Street Hospital Complex, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home. The possible reuse of the latter two sites during the next 20 years presents planning challenges that must be addressed proactively so that the area's well-established neighborhoods are protected and enhanced. 2200.3

Rock Creek East is served by two major transit hubs—the Takoma and Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metrorail stations. Historically, the major circulation routes through the Planning area have been the north-south arterials leading out of Downtown, such as 16th Street, 14th Street, Georgia Avenue (7th Street), New Hampshire Avenue, and North Capitol Street. East/west circulation is more limited. Missouri Avenue/ Military Road is the major east-west street and one of the few that connects the neighborhoods east of Rock Creek Park with those to the west. 2200.4





★ ★ ★ Government of the  
 District of Columbia  
 Anthony A. Williams, Mayor  
 Office of Planning ~ June, 2006



## DISTRICT ELEMENTS

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, Rock Creek East is projected to experience modest growth between 2005 and 2025. An increase of 3,400 households is projected, with the Planning Area reaching 28,000 households by 2025. The number of jobs is expected to increase from about 30,900 today to 32,400 in 2025.

### **Projections** <sup>2206</sup>

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, Rock Creek East is projected to experience modest growth between 2005 and 2025. An increase of 3,400 households is projected, with the Planning Area reaching 28,000 households by 2025. Population is projected to grow by 13 percent over the 20-year period, reaching about 71,000 in 2025. The population forecasts presume that the federal government will proceed with redevelopment of portions of the Armed Forces Retirement Home; this growth represents more than one-third of the total for the Planning Area. Most of the remaining growth is projected to occur along Georgia Avenue, and near the Metro stations in Takoma and Petworth, consistent with the adopted Small Area Plans for each location. The forecasts do not assume housing development on Walter Reed Hospital. <sup>2206.1</sup>

The number of jobs is expected to increase from about 30,900 today to 32,400 in 2025. These forecasts presume a sharp drop in employment between 2010 and 2015 as federal jobs at Walter Reed Hospital are repositioned. However, they presume that most of these jobs will be replaced in the long run by new jobs on the site, and that additional employment growth will occur on Georgia Avenue, Kennedy Street, in the Washington Hospital Center complex, at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, and in other established business districts within the Planning Area. <sup>2206.2</sup>

### **Major Planning and Development Issues** <sup>2207</sup>

Three Comprehensive Plan workshops took place in Rock Creek East during the Comprehensive Plan revision. These meetings provided an opportunity for residents to discuss neighborhood planning issues as well as citywide issues. The Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and several Civic Associations were briefed on the Plan, providing additional input. There have also been many meetings in the community not directly connected to the Comprehensive Plan, but addressing long-range planning issues. These include Small Area Plan meetings for Takoma and Georgia Avenue/Petworth, as well as meetings on the Great Streets program, the city's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and various transportation studies. <sup>2207.1</sup>





*Tree cover and low densities contribute to the "park-like" quality of many Rock Creek East neighborhoods*

- (a) Land use planning for Rock Creek East should protect and enhance the stable neighborhoods for which the area is known. Residents at Comp Plan meetings described their neighborhoods as "park-like" due to their tree cover, low densities, and proximity to Rock Creek Park. An important part of what creates the park-like ambiance is the large federal and institutional properties in the community. This is particularly true for Walter Reed Hospital and the Armed Forces Retirement Home, both of which may be redeveloped during the next two decades. Plans for these sites should make every effort possible to retain the open space, mature trees, and visual buffers that make these sites welcome neighbors in the community today. Residents at Comprehensive Plan meetings were also clear that design guidelines and zoning standards for these sites, and for other areas addressed by Small Area Plans, must be followed and enforced once they are prepared.
  
- (b) While protecting established neighborhoods is a priority, Rock Creek East also recognizes the need to provide a variety of housing choices. This community has always taken pride in the fact that it is economically integrated, with housing options for seniors, lower income households, young professionals, middle class families, and persons with special needs, as well as affluent households. Appropriate sites for infill housing have been identified along Georgia Avenue, around the Takoma Metro station, between Upshur and Taylor near 14th Street, along Kennedy Street, and on a limited number of other properties in the community. Development on these sites must be in keeping with the scale of the surrounding community, provide ample green space, address parking and traffic issues, upgrade infrastructure where needed, and serve a variety of incomes. Existing housing should continue to be renovated and rehabilitated, with programs to assist seniors and low-income residents and avoid displacement.

## DISTRICT ELEMENTS

The property has exceptional significance as a natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resource and is one of the largest contiguous properties in the District of Columbia.

### RCE-2.5 Armed Forces Retirement Home/ Irving Street Hospital Campus <sup>2215</sup>

The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH), formerly known as the U.S. Soldiers and Airmens Home, is a functioning home for almost 1,400 veterans of the U.S. Military. It occupies a 272-acre site in the southeast part of the Planning Area. It has been an institution of national importance for more than 150 years, and is both a DC Historic Landmark and is a National Register of Historic Places landmark. The property has exceptional significance as a natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resource and is one of the largest contiguous properties in the District of Columbia. <sup>2215.1</sup>

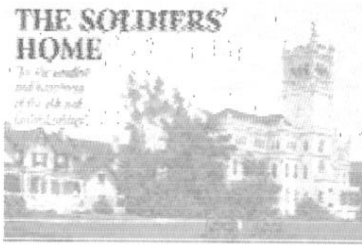
The AFRH completed a new master plan in 2005. Because of a limited revenue stream, the AFRH was authorized by Congress to leverage its principal asset—land—to make up shortfalls in the trust fund that finances its operations. Its master plan calls for consolidation of operations in the northern core of the campus, retention of the golf course, and development of the remainder of the campus over the next 20 years. Preliminary federal plans call for urban densities on much of the site, with a combination of residential, retail, institutional, and office uses. <sup>2215.2</sup>

The prospect of redevelopment creates exciting opportunities but also raises concerns about the scale of development, provisions for open space, traffic and environmental impacts, effects on visual and historic resources, and the compatibility of the development with the surrounding row house neighborhoods. The District currently has limited jurisdiction over the site, but is working with the federal government to ensure that the impacts of future development are mitigated, and that the site plan establishes compatible transitions in density and preserves appropriate areas as open space. As portions of the site are sold to the private sector, they should be subject to zoning and new Comprehensive Plan Map designations by the District. <sup>2215.3</sup>

To the south of the AFRH, the Irving Street Hospital Campus includes approximately 50 acres of health care related uses located between Michigan Avenue NW, Irving Street NW, Park Place NW, and First Street NW. The hospital complex includes approximately 8,000 employees. Facilities include the Washington Hospital Center, Children's Hospital National Medical Center, the National Rehabilitation Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital. The Washington Hospital Center, founded in 1958, is the largest private hospital in the District. <sup>2215.4</sup>

In the future, expansion of hospital facilities may be necessary to maintain appropriate levels of care to a growing population and to support new medical care initiatives. This expansion may include ancillary uses such as medical office buildings, clinics, hotels, and conference facilities. <sup>2215.5</sup>





The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) has been a functioning home for veterans of the U.S. Military for more than a century

**Policy RCE-2.5.1: AFRH Redevelopment**

Ensure that any future development of the Armed Forces Retirement Home is sensitive to and compatible with surrounding uses. The scale of development should reflect prevailing densities in adjacent communities. The highest densities should be clustered along North Capitol Street and near the Irving Street Hospital area. Lower densities and open space are preferred near the Park View, Pleasant Plains, Petworth, and University Heights areas. 2215.6

**Policy RCE-2.5.2: Housing Opportunities**

Strongly support a variety of housing types, developed at a range of densities and serving a range of incomes, in the event the Armed Forces Retirement Home is developed. The opportunity to develop larger units suitable for families on the site should be recognized. 2215.7

**Policy RCE-2.5.3: Resource Protection**

To the greatest extent possible, require the protection of panoramic views, historic landmarks, and important historic landscapes on the Armed Forces Retirement Home site. The historic links between this site and adjacent land at the McMillan Sand Filtration site and the 49-acre property acquired by Catholic University should be reflected in its design and planning. 2215.8

**Policy RCE-2.5.4: Open Space Conservation**

Encourage the designation of a substantial portion of the Armed Forces Retirement Home as open space and public parkland as the site is made available for reuse, particularly on the western perimeter of the site where it abuts residential uses. A linear park connection extending from this site south through the Irving Street Hospital Campus and McMillan Reservoir Sand Filtration site to LeDroit Park should be pursued. 2215.9

**Policy RCE-2.5.5: Irving Street Hospital Campus Development**

Encourage continued development of the Irving Street Hospital Campus with hospitals and health care services. Promote land uses that are flexible enough to accommodate the future needs of the facilities while considering the impacts to the surrounding residential areas and the additional impact to the District's roadway, infrastructure and public service resources. 2215.10

▪ *Action RCE-2.5-A: AFRH Master Plan Coordination*

Coordinate with the AFRH and General Services Administration to review the AFRH Master Plan with attention to desired land uses, zoning, building height, intensity of proposed development, circulation, open space, infrastructure, and public services. Site plan review must be carefully coordinated to address potential impacts. 2215.11

▪ *Action RCE-2.5-B: Irving Street Hospital Campus Strategic Planning*

Coordinate with hospital operators on the Irving Street Hospital campus to ensure that necessary facility expansions are well planned and mitigate potential adverse impacts on surrounding areas. Review existing hospital facility strategic plans to determine appropriate land uses and determine if zoning changes are needed. 2215.12