

FEDERAL CITY COUNCIL

CATALYST

federalcitycouncil.org | 2024 Spring/Summer

Downtown DC Recovery Advances

Union Station Project
Meets Milestones

Emerging Leaders Program
Welcomes 2nd Cohort

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Letter from the CEO and Executive Director

Dear Trustees,

The District of Columbia is a mosaic of distinct neighborhoods, with some wards bustling with exceptional development and others still restructuring from the hardships and disruptions precipitated by the pandemic.

In this *Catalyst*, you'll find a portrait of our multifaceted approach to Downtown DC's recovery and the interlocking initiatives and programs that underscore our work. We share our progress — and our hopes — in moving the needle forward.

Here's the big picture: Reviving Downtown DC is more important today than ever before. We are committed to transformative plans that will ensure Downtown's rejuvenation is successful, equitable and sustainable.

In our story about reinvigorating Downtown DC's economy, you'll discover how initiatives such as the Downtown Action Plan complement our ongoing efforts in transportation, infrastructure and economic development activities.

We are gratified with the results of our partnership with George Washington University and the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District. You can read about the newly proposed "entrepreneur visa" program for foreign nationals who promise to bring their expertise and business to DC's West End neighborhood.

In our article about the Union Station modernization, you'll learn how nearly a decade of behind-the-scenes work by FC2 is coming to fruition in 2024 with federal approval of the \$8.8 billion expansion project's environmental impact statement and its governance structure.

Be sure to read our concluding story about the Emerging Leaders Program. It is our responsibility to seek and train the next generation of leaders for our organization and our community, and I'm proud to say the Federal City Council, alongside our Trustees, has made this program a top priority.

2024 is already proving to be a remarkably successful year, and we are pleased to share all of our work with you.

Sincerely,



Tony Williams

The District of Columbia is a mosaic of distinct neighborhoods, with some wards bustling with exceptional development and others still restructuring.

Photograph courtesy of the Downtown DC BID

MONUMENTAL SPORTS TO ANCHOR REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN

Reinvigorating Downtown DC neighborhoods with strategic investments in world-class sports, entertainment and parks facilities will not only reshape the District's physical landscape but also revitalize DC's idling economy.

To fully leverage Downtown DC's attributes, the Federal City Council (FC2) and its civic and government partners have identified a series of investments that will make it a safe and welcoming neighborhood with spirited nightlife, unrivaled public spaces and a buoyant arts and cultural scene.

Chief among those investments is the city's \$515 million agreement with Monumental Sports and Entertainment, which keeps the Washington Wizards and Capitals at the Capital One Arena through 2050. The public money is earmarked for Capital One renovations (\$500 million) and improvements in the Gallery Place/Chinatown neighborhood (\$15 million).

"It's good news for everyone that Monumental Sports is remaining in the heart of our city," said Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director. "Monumental Sports responded to the people's wishes that the teams remain in the city, and now they will be part of the rebirth of Downtown DC."

In December 2023, Monumental Sports had announced its decision to move the teams to Virginia and build a \$2 billion sports complex, music venue,

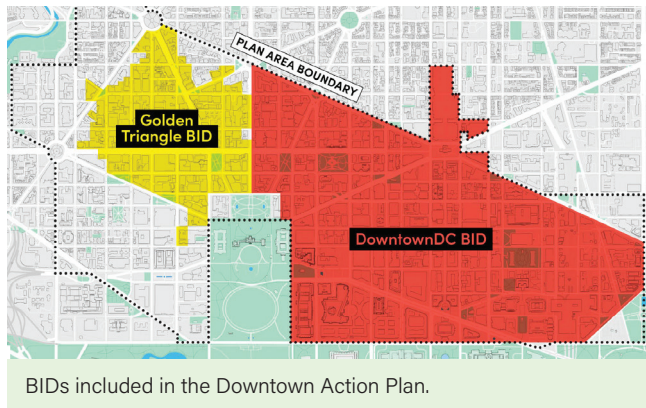
hotels and company headquarters in Arlington. That deal fell through when the state legislature declined to approve the project.

The Capital One Arena agreement with the DC government, announced in March 2024, is just one piece of the economic renaissance contemplated in the District Action Plan, which envisions a series of investments to build out prominent sports, entertainment and parks facilities through new investments and energy.

"We are going to have a state-of-the-art urban arena in Downtown DC and that's a great deal for DC, for the teams, and for the fans," said DC Mayor Muriel Bowser when announcing the new deal with Monumental Sports. "We made a great offer – and kept that offer on the table – because we have known all along that this is a win-win for our city and the teams."

DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN TAKING FLIGHT

Before the pandemic, Downtown DC was one of the busiest neighborhoods in the District, with an economy powered by foot traffic from office workers and tourists. The shift to remote work reshaped the business district, and the DC government and civic partners like FC2 have reimaged the neighborhood



GALLERY PLACE/ CHINATOWN TASK FORCE ON THE JOB

The first stage in shaping the future of the Gallery Place/Chinatown node was the appointment of a task force to develop an activation strategy, a long-term vision and an investment approach for the blocks encompassing Gallery Place and Capital One Arena.

Chaired by FC2 Trustees Jodie McLean of EDENS and Deborah Ratner Salzberg of Uplands Real Estate Partners, the task force is hoping to supercharge the neighborhood the way the city has done in the neighborhoods of Union Market, Navy Yard, the Wharf and City Center.

“This is our opportunity to invest in a re-envisioned and inclusive Gallery Place/Chinatown area,” said McLean. “The task force is focused on creating a more connected district filled with memorable moments where people feel safe and are inspired to explore, play, connect, celebrate, live, work and share their stories.”

Given the good news about Monumental Sports, the task force’s work will be less onerous, but it will still need to craft the vision and roadmap to re-envision the area between the Walter E. Washington Convention Center to the north, 10th Street NW to the west, Pennsylvania Avenue NW to the south and 5th Street NW to the east.

The activation activities would include identifying and coordinating activities to enhance public safety, cleanliness and public health resources in and around Gallery Place/Chinatown, as well as encouraging the launch of public events that would draw visitors to the area. Critical to the work will be sourcing, evaluating and recommending investment tools to support stabilization of existing businesses, the prioritization of critical capital investments and the repositioning of real estate assets into new productive uses.

One such use would be converting office space into residential real estate. In 2023, Mayor Bowser proposed bringing 15,000 residents to Downtown to fill empty buildings and address housing affordability. Five conversion projects are already underway, and the mayor said there are another 11 more in the planning stages. ■

in the Downtown Action Plan, which was released earlier this year.

The plan represents an unparalleled collaboration between FC2, Mayor Bowser, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID) and the Downtown DC BID. Developed over eight months, the plan outlines a comprehensive five-year economic development strategy that’s focused on creating a robust and equitable District core.

“The Downtown Action Plan reflects the transformative potential of new investments and resources for the downtown and the District,” said Williams. “The Federal City Council, its Trustees and its staff look forward to realizing the plan to bring the same kind of vitality and strength to Downtown DC as we see in neighborhoods such as The Wharf and Navy Yard.”

During 2023, the plan was formulated after regular engagement with residents, stakeholders and urban planning leaders. The plan was released in spring 2024 after a number of focus groups, planning sessions and workshops ensured the addition of diverse perspectives and input.

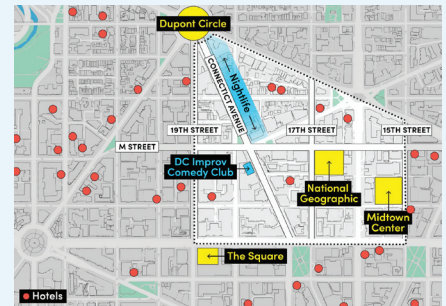
The plan’s foundational themes include: anchoring Downtown’s comeback in a commitment to public safety; creating a place of choice for companies to locate and do business; building a residential base; leveraging transportation as an asset; and marshaling public and private sector forces to implement the plan. It also identified five distinct geographic nodes within Downtown and the Golden Triangle BID, each with tailored interventions to enhance their existing unique attributes. (*See Downtown Action Plan Nodes, p. 4.*)

DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN NODES

The Downtown Action Plan outlines five key geographic nodes within the downtown area, which represent zones where place-based activities can be deployed to elevate individual neighborhoods to their full potential, while also establishing vibrant and livable communities.

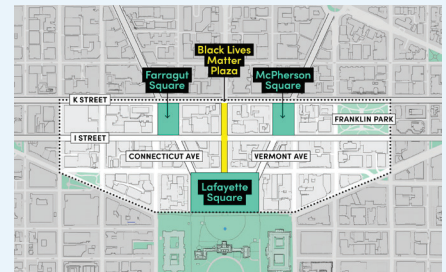
DOWNTOWN WEST

This node would create a new entertainment, hospitality and cultural district to attract people from surrounding neighborhoods, by leveraging National Geographic's redevelopment project and attracting a new entertainment venue in the Golden Triangle neighborhood, which sees little activity outside of business hours.



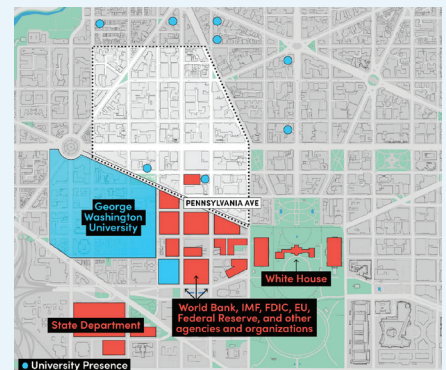
HISTORIC GREEN TRIANGLE

Immediately north of the White House, this node can draw tourists to downtown's "history triangle" between the parks at Farragut Square, McPherson Square and Lafayette Square. By revamping Farragut Square and McPherson Square, the city can connect these and other nearby parks and public spaces via a network of pedestrian-friendly corridors.



PENN WEST EQUITY, INNOVATION & UNIVERSITY DISTRICT

DC will capitalize on the trend that is seeing more universities establish and grow their DC presence. Penn West would become a hub for social sciences, technology and policy innovation, with a robust network of technology companies led by George Washington University and workforce development programs. Close to the White House, federal agencies and global organizations, Penn West is positioned to bring public, private and academic stakeholders together.



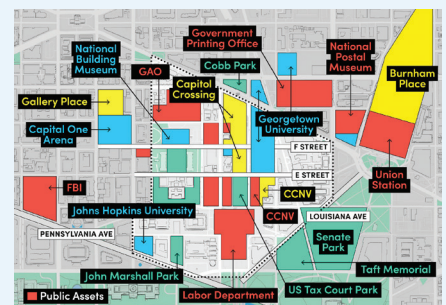
PENN QUARTER/CHINATOWN

Penn Quarter/Chinatown is already a popular cultural, sports and entertainment district, serving as home to the Washington Wizards and Capitals. New development will activate new cultural and arts programs, anchored by the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery and Smithsonian American Art Museum and nearby performance venues.



DOWNTOWN EAST

Considered a quiet zone after business hours, Downtown East offers a canvas for mixed-use development as it continues to expand thanks to local universities, such as Georgetown University, which has expanded its law school campus in the area. The mix of commercial, residential and academic uses offers an eclectic and diverse urban neighborhood.



WASHINGTON UNION STATION EXPANSION PROJECT HITS MAJOR MILESTONES

The \$8.8 billion Washington Union Station Expansion Project (SEP) to upgrade the 53 acres of railyard and historic station's aging infrastructure and improve its connectivity and capacity hit key milestones in early 2024, bringing the massive project closer to reality.

"We knew that the redevelopment of Union Station could have a catalytic impact on the region, but that outcome was not guaranteed at certain stages of the environmental review process. Thankfully, the final proposed project hits the marks needed in order for the redevelopment to have maximal impact," said Maura Brophy, President and CEO of the NoMa Business Improvement District and Federal City Council (FC2) representative on the Union Station Redevelopment Corporation (USRC) Board.

The USRC is working in tandem with FC2 and other partners, including the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Amtrak, to implement the long-term redevelopment of the facility and the surrounding area. The massive project would preserve the station's historic main hall and rotunda.

Opened in 1907, Union Station is owned by the federal government, and overseen by and leased to other organizations and institutions. Amtrak owns the station's tracks and platforms, while the USRC has managed the facility since 1985.

The multi-modal transportation project will reconstruct 25 acres of train track and platforms, create a new train hall and a new bus station, add three new passenger concourses and create new pick-up and drop-off facilities.

This spring, after a thorough, multi-year review, FRA released a combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation for the project. The March 12, 2024, release was a game-changer.

"Now that the Environmental Impact Statement is complete, there's more work to be done," Brophy added. "It allows us to turn our attention to things like design and construction."

The FEIS analyzed the nature, severity and duration of environmental impacts that might occur in implementing the various elements of the project.



Rendering of Washington Union Station future bus terminal

The ROD confirmed that the USRC, which has guided station operations for more than 30 years, would serve as the project lead on the redevelopment. Plus, a knowledgeable hand, Doug Carr, who oversaw the completion of the Moynihan Train Hall in New York City, began work as USRC's President and CEO in August 2022.

FC2 also released its Governance Study in April, delivering a lot of answers about how the USRC's responsibilities will shift from three decades of asset management to its new role delivering a major project. Importantly, the USRC will have to adapt to its new role of advocating for government funding for the enterprise.

"Now that we have the Record of Decision, we are able to have much different conversations about funding," said Laura Miller Brooks, FC2 Director of Transportation and Infrastructure. "The Record of Decision was a huge barrier to our being able to go out and seek funding because we didn't yet have the legitimacy of reaching this milestone."

The study clarifies the role of the owners and funders of the project, and it gives USRC more authority to bring in other important stakeholders to ensure all the key voices are participating in decisions.

The main station will remain the same as it is today, and the renovations will be on the concourses in the station that were constructed in the 1980s. The renovation project is estimated to be completed by 2040.

"We're still a ways out, but we're much, much closer to getting there than we've been before this point," said Miller Brooks. ■

THE BUILD FELLOWSHIP LAUNCHED

To encourage the growth of business startups in the District, a broad coalition of local organizations, including the Federal City Council (FC2), have launched the GW Penn West Global Build Fellowship, which offers H1-B visas for foreign national entrepreneurs who locate their businesses in DC.

Working in partnership, the DC government, the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID), George Washington University (GW), the Washington DC Economic Partnership and FC2 established the innovative Washington DC Global Solidarity Initiative to spark economic growth. The Build Fellowship falls under its rubric.

"The program could help foreign students with new business venture ideas stay in the United States, and foreign business founders who want to come to the District," said Becky Strauss, FC2 Director of Economic Initiatives. "This will attract entrepreneurs and enterprising founders while helping reduce office vacancies by leasing to new business tenants."

In exchange for the H1-B visa, entrepreneurs must provide five hours of service weekly to GW through internships or mentorships for students. The higher-education visas are arranged by GW and the Open Avenues Foundation, which handles the paperwork for the H1-B part-time work visas. The number of available visas is not capped.

The fellowship and the Penn West Global Soft Landing Program launched in April. The Soft Landing Program gives companies, including fellows, access to flexible, discounted leases at



Photo by Nick Moreland

Studio by Tishman Speyer, a premium co-working space in the Golden Triangle BID.

"We want to leverage the expertise of these foreign founders so that GW students are benefiting from their knowledge as successful entrepreneurs," said Elizabeth Parker, Associate Director of Economic Development for the Golden Triangle BID. "At the same time, participating fellows will have access to the resources at GW and the Soft Landing Program to build out their companies and find their market niche."

The special visas would expire after 36 months, and the assumption is an entrepreneur's newly formed company would be economically viable by then to sponsor a full-time H1-B or -O visa and eventually a green card.

The visa program has two distinct advantages: it encourages recent immigrant graduates to stay in the U.S. to set up their businesses, and the visa carries geographic limits, encouraging entrepreneurs to maintain their companies in the District after they receive their permanent visas. ■

DC BUILDS DC HIRING EVENT A SUCCESS

DC Builds DC hosted its inaugural hiring event this spring, bringing together 15 companies from across the District, Maryland and Virginia to interview dozens of job candidates. Forty-two of 60 attending candidates received 60 job offers or second interviews for positions ranging from entry-level construction roles to field engineers.

"Experienced and first-time construction workers are always needed," said Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO

and Executive Director. "We wanted to link qualified candidates with the employers looking to hire them. This event has resulted in job offers and jobs that might never have happened without an initiative like this one."

What made the hiring event so effective was the groundwork laid by DC Builds DC and its partners before the event. To meet the goal of attracting the right candidates for the available positions, much of the work of finding and vetting applicants was completed



Photo by Tony Kosiyachinda

beforehand by education providers who ensured candidates' job readiness through a rubric shaped by employers. There were some 80 positions available.

"When they went to the hiring event, the applicants knew what position and company they were applying to and then they sat for a first-round interview," said Tanya Borachi, Senior Associate, FC2 Education and Workforce Initiatives. "Thanks to their careful preparation for the hiring event, some candidates were hired on the spot, and that moment of excitement and celebration was unmatched."

To evaluate candidates, DC Builds DC also identified the skills deemed most necessary for entry-level roles. For example, being familiar with carpentry or plumbing is a favorable capability, but so are understanding the hours of construction work, the importance of safety on work sites and being dependable.

DC Builds DC focuses on construction-sector jobs because there is a significant need in the DC metropolitan region. By 2029, the number of construction jobs within the District alone is projected to grow by 8%. Hiring event candidates came from local high schools, colleges and work training programs, and others were returning citizens who are re-entering the workforce.

In curating the hiring event, DC Builds DC also focused on long-term job retention. It inventoried workplaces to connect applicants to positions that make sense for them, given their personal or family challenges. For example, some work was Metro accessible, and others required a car or a rideshare option to reach a work site.

"All the employers are really invested in making sure they not only hire great talent, but also that they get them onboarded and retained for the long haul," said Borachi.

Additionally, DC Builds DC is working with the Workforce Investment Council to create a resource guide outlining programs and agencies that offer support services to new employees, from transportation to childcare. ■

MAXIMIZING PUBLIC SAFETY

Safe streets are critical to sustained and widespread growth in the District of Columbia, and the Federal City Council (FC2) continues to advocate for broad public safety solutions through a variety of transformational initiatives and discrete anti-crime solutions.

In fact, public safety initiatives have been woven into the key strategies focused on revitalizing Downtown DC, in particular the Downtown Action Plan, the Capital One Arena and Gallery Place/Chinatown neighborhood redevelopment and the recently enacted public safety measures.

FC2 also will pursue its efforts to tackle criminal justice challenges that have been difficult to resolve because some of the jurisdictional issues involve the federal government. Furthermore, FC2 continues its support of DC programs to reduce gun violence and to address entrenched poverty and workforce development.

As part of FC2's public safety advocacy, it has participated in forums and workshops to better understand what drives crime in the city and how best to reduce it. In May, FC2 co-hosted the Stopping the Cycle of Violence with Peace for DC and the Greater Washington Community Foundation. The forum explored a number of solutions, including innovative gun control programs that focus on the individuals and communities most at risk of gun violence.

"Continued attention to crime prevention and evidence-based violence reduction programs will ensure secure neighborhoods, which are the foundation of any successful city," said Kevin Clinton, FC2 Chief Program Officer. ■

EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM ENTERS ITS SECOND YEAR

The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) recently welcomed its second cohort of mid-career professionals who are looking to enhance their skills and make even more meaningful contributions to the District's future.

The Federal City Council (FC2) launched the ELP in 2023 to develop the next generation of civic leaders in DC, and to provide participants with the network and skills necessary to achieve greater impact in their lives and in DC.

"The Emerging Leaders Program immerses participants in the history of DC and the critical issues facing the District of Columbia today," said Barbara Mullenex, Membership Engagement Chair and Membership Committee Co-Chair, and Managing Principal at Perkins Eastman. "It also helps them develop a network of friends and allies by connecting them with current FC2 members, ELP alumni and other influential leaders in the District."

A guiding principle in developing the ELP was to create continuity between current and future FC2 members. FC2 is committed to attracting top leaders and highly motivated individuals to ensure the future of the organization and the District.

"Introducing the next generation of leaders to the Federal City Council is imperative," said Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director. "Our membership has always played an important role in

DC's civic life, and we are committed to maintaining the quality of our trustees now and into the future."

By fostering a group of leaders that reflects the rich diversity of the District, the program ensures that future leadership of the FC2 is as inclusive and representative as the community it serves.

The ELP's monthly sessions consist of curated programming including behind-the-scenes tours, expert panels and cohort networking. ELP participants gain an understanding of the issues shaping the District and exposure to FC2 initiatives and engagement opportunities. ELP participants are funded through fees and scholarships provided by Trustees.

The ELP program gives participants unique opportunities to learn about the District and build out their own resumes. Participants graduate with the skills, connections and support necessary to navigate the transition to higher leadership roles.

If you are interested in sponsoring an Emerging Leader or providing an in-kind contribution to an ELP session, please scan the QR code or contact Melissa Crawford, FC2 Chief Operating Officer, at mcrawford@federalcitycouncil.org. ■



Emerging Leaders second cohort kick-off event on April 18.

Photos by Alfredo Flores.

Quarterly Member Meeting Takes Trustees to The REACH

Trustees gathered March 20 at The REACH at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for the FC2 First Quarter Member Meeting. Elliot Doomes, Commissioner of the GSA Public Buildings Service, discussed federal office occupancy policies and future downsizing in DC. Other panels featured Dr. Sheila Brooks and Dr. Faith Gibson Hubbard, who updated members on the Emerging Leaders Program, and Paul Dougherty and Yesim Sayin who outlined the fiscal cliff facing the city.



Photos by Alfredo Flores

Nationals Philanthropies Honors Anthony Williams with Power of Baseball Award

Washington Nationals Philanthropies, the charitable arm of the Washington Nationals Baseball Club, honored Anthony Williams, FC2 CEO and Executive Director, and former Mayor of Washington, DC, with its annual Power of Baseball Award. The illustrious award was given out at the Nationals Homecoming Gala on March 28 and recognized Williams for his "exemplary leadership." Williams was also given the honor of throwing out the ceremonial first pitch at the Nationals' home opener on April 1.



Photos courtesy of Washington Nationals Philanthropies



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