

# NoMa Parks Foundation

## Business Plan








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The NoMa Parks Foundation will establish welcoming, sustainable, beautiful spaces where people can play, refresh and connect in NoMa, now and in the future.



Early concept plan for park at First and L Streets NE

## I. BACKGROUND

### History

NoMa is currently Washington, D.C.'s fastest growing neighborhood. Over the last 200 years, NoMa has undergone numerous transformations. Originally inhabited by Piscataway Indians, the area now known as NoMa began to develop in 1792 when Florida Avenue was established as the rural boundary of Washington, D.C. By the mid-1800s, NoMa was primarily farmland settled by working-class Irish. Livestock wandered the area. The immigrant residents named the area "Swampoodle," for the wet, swampy land and puddles created from overflows of the Tiber Creek, a now-buried waterway that ran roughly along North Capitol Street. Later, Swampoodle was largely characterized by brick rowhomes, similar to those seen in historic residential areas of Washington, D.C.

In 1856, President Lincoln established Gallaudet University to the northeast of Swampoodle, at the intersection of Florida Avenue, NE and Sixth Street, NE. In 1860, the Government Printing Office was established by an Act of Congress at the corner of North Capitol Street and H Street, and the following year President Lincoln appointed the first Printer of the United States.

The GPO building was 10 minutes from the Capitol and adjacent to Tiber Creek. Many GPO workers lived in the neighborhood with their families. September of 1862 was a particularly busy time at the GPO as workers, over a three-day period, printed fifteen thousand copies of “General Orders, number 139,” the version of the Emancipation Proclamation that was distributed to government agencies, military commanders and troops, the press and diplomatic posts.

With the building of Union Station in the late 1800s and early 1900s, over 100 homes were condemned to make way for track and terminal construction, displacing and literally dividing residents of the Swampoodle neighborhood. Once this rail hub was established, the area north of the station became heavily industrial, with coal yards between N and M Streets, NE on First Street, NE, and development of warehouses for local businesses such as DC Asphalt Plant, People’s Drug Store Company and The Hecht Company.

In 1941, Uline Arena, later known as the Washington Coliseum, opened its doors as an ice hockey and basketball arena and, in 1964, famously hosted the first Beatles concert played in North America. As industry declined through the 1970s and 1980s, the area experienced disinvestment and deteriorated into a smattering of vacant lots and abandoned warehouse buildings.



NoMa on a sunny day in 2011

Towards the end of the 1990s, the District of Columbia government began to re-examine this neighborhood, seeing an opportunity for new growth and investment. Over the 1980s and 1990s, commercial development began to take hold in the blocks directly adjacent to Union Station. Driven by discussion of a new Metrorail station near the intersection of New York and Florida Avenues, along with national trends in center city revitalization, District of Columbia planning initiatives renamed the area “NoMa,” identifying the neighborhood as a potentially prime location for new commercial and residential development. These plans placed emphasis on attracting technology, media, and creative industries to the area, along with residents attracted to transit-oriented, urban living.



## NoMa Today

NoMa is currently the fastest-growing neighborhood in Washington, D.C. As of this writing, NoMa has more than 11.8 million square feet of office space (the vast majority of this space is less than 10 years old), and there are three office projects currently under construction that will add another million square feet of space. In 2010, the first apartment buildings in NoMa opened and there are now just under 2,000 apartment units with more than 1,500 additional apartments under construction and nearly complete.

If the current pace of development continues, NoMa will be completely built out by 2024. At that time, it will likely include more than 8,000 residential units, roughly 22 million square feet of office space, a number of significant retail/mixed-use projects and several hotels.

In addition, there are important new developments in the greater NoMa neighborhood, along and adjoining the NoMa BID borders. They include: (1) the re-development of historic Union Market as

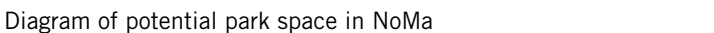


Concept Plan for the Tracks Park

a mixed-use community integrating the original food market, new residential and, eventually, office development; (2) the redevelopment of the beautiful Gallaudet University campus that will include new residential and retail development ([www.gallaudet.edu/campus\\_design/2022\\_campus\\_plan.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/campus_design/2022_campus_plan.html)), and (3) Union Station/Burnham Place project, which will strongly link Union Station to NoMa, upgrade the rail facilities to serve 21st century needs and add 3 million square feet of mixed-use air rights development ([www.usrcdc.com/update/Union\\_station\\_master\\_plan.pdf](http://www.usrcdc.com/update/Union_station_master_plan.pdf) and [www.burnhamplace.com](http://www.burnhamplace.com)).

Notwithstanding this truly remarkable wave of development and revitalization, one critical element was overlooked when the District planned the redevelopment of the area; namely, PARKS.

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## NoMa BID and NoMa Parks

In 2007, the NoMa Business Improvement District (NoMa BID) was formally established pursuant to the Business District Improvement Act of 1997. The successor to an informal organization of NoMa property owners and stakeholders, the NoMa BID was established to support the emergence of NoMa as the District's most exciting office, retail and residential neighborhood.

For the last several years, the NoMa BID has worked to identify ways to overcome the omission of parks in the original planning for NoMa. The NoMa BID has invested significant resources in creating, with strong community consensus, visionary park plans for NoMa ([www.nomabid.org/parks/](http://www.nomabid.org/parks/)). It has developed and vetted concept plans for parks with affected property owners and relevant DC agencies. The NoMa BID has also led an effective initiative to enlist executive branch and legislative support for the funding of NoMa parks. In September 2012, Mayor Vincent Gray committed \$490,000 to NoMa parks planning and the DC Council endorsed a priority for funding of \$18 million for NoMa parks should there be surplus District government revenue in fiscal year 2013.

In 2012, the NoMa BID Board of Directors determined that the cause of parks in NoMa would be further advanced by the creation of a separate non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

That organization was incorporated as the NoMa Parks Foundation on December 13, 2012, and its mission is as follows:

**The NoMa Parks Foundation will establish welcoming, sustainable, beautiful spaces where people can play, refresh and connect in NoMa, now and in the future.**



A young girl at NoMa Summer Screen 2012

## II. THREE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

Fortunately, there are still several sites within NoMa that may accommodate the development of pocket or linear parks, the placement of public art, the development of a central “commons” to accommodate events in NoMa, the development of neighborhood playgrounds and recreation-centered open space. Virtually all of these sites have private and/or complex public ownership structures (e.g. rights shared among various public entities including the District of Columbia government, the Federal government and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority).

The NoMa Parks Foundation will play the critical, long-term role in the development and implementation of the vision for a system of parks and accessible public spaces in NoMa. Consulting with



Concept for park at Third Street and N Street, NE

community stakeholders, identifying funding sources, negotiating with property owners, developing conceptual designs, obtaining regulatory approvals and, ultimately, constructing parks will require a robust and sustained effort by the NoMa Parks Foundation.

Parks in NoMa will incorporate the best available thinking on urban parks, public safety, sustainability and ease of maintenance. Low-impact development measures and stormwater management innovations will also be central parts of the NoMa park framework. Demonstrations of alternative energy sources, vertical green spaces, portable/temporary community gardens, etc. are of particular interest and will be considered when creating NoMa park design concepts.



NoMa parks will also incorporate best practices in the areas of handicapped accessibility and crime prevention through environmental design. Given the close proximity to Gallaudet University, planning and design should also consider incorporation of Deaf Space Design where appropriate and feasible.

Most significantly, the NoMa parks system will be evaluated in terms of its ability to bring neighbors together as a community and to satisfy individual and family needs for community space.

Annual objectives for each of the first three years of the NoMa Parks Foundation are outlined below.



Conceptual rendering for Storey Park development planned at First and L Streets, NE

## Annual Objectives: Year One

1. Corporate Matters
  - a. Establish corporation and obtain tax exempt status
  - b. Identify Board Chair and Board members to nominate to NoMa BID Board of Directors for approval
  - c. Engage an individual to assist with grants/fund-raising and events
  - d. Create marketing materials
  - e. Hold a "First Annual" NoMa Parks Foundation awareness and fund-raising event
2. The Poodle
  - a. Obtain funding through DC Office of Planning to proceed with NoMa parks design with a focus on the L Street Plaza (the "Poodle")



- b. Engage A/E firm
- c. Study relationship of adjacent properties that would accommodate and enhance L Street Plaza
- d. Meet with adjacent property owners and negotiate for needed rights
- 3. Other Parks and Open Space
  - a. Identify other NoMa high-priority park and open space opportunities
  - b. Negotiate to secure additional private rights as needed
- 4. Study Florida Avenue underpass enhancement possibilities and potential access improvements to the Metropolitan Branch Trail
- 5. Funding Efforts
  - a. Continue educating DC Government policy makers about need for funding
  - b. Identify potential sources of grant funding
  - c. Seek funds as appropriate



A example of the current green space in NoMa

## Annual Objectives: Year Two

1. Corporate Matters
  - a. Hire full-time NoMa Parks Development Manager
  - b. Establish framework for management of parks and public space and prepare a forecast of the costs associated therewith
  - c. Identify potential for earned revenue
  - d. Hold a “Second Annual” NoMa Parks Foundation event
2. The Poodle
  - a. Engage A/E firm for further design
  - b. Finalize construction drawings/apply for permits
3. Other Parks and Open Space
  - a. Implement two micro-park opportunities
  - b. Advance plans for Third & N Street park to coincide with Union Market project
  - c. Continue conversation/negotiations re: acquisition of private rights
4. Funding Efforts
  - a. Continue educating DC Government policy makers about need for funding
  - b. Identify potential sources of grant funding
  - c. Seek funds as appropriate, focus on grant funds in furtherance of green practices/arts engagement/community connections
  - d. Finalize earned income strategy for NoMa parks (as noted in “Year Two-1” above)

## Annual Objectives: Year Three

1. Corporate Matters
  - a. Hire park rangers if funding has been identified
  - b. Hold a “Third Annual” event
2. The Poodle
  - a. Construct the Poodle
  - b. Develop Opening and Operating Plans
3. Other Parks and Open Space
  - a. Implement micro-park opportunities
  - b. Begin implementation of Third & N Street park to coincide with Union Market project
  - c. Begin planning for the NoMa neighborhood’s larger recreation park
4. Funding Efforts
  - a. Finalize public funding strategy for balance of needed park funds
  - b. Seek funds as appropriate

## Current Status

The NoMa Parks Foundation through the efforts of the Board and staff of the NoMa BID has gotten off to a strong start in meeting its Year One objectives. Discussions are ongoing with adjacent property owners for construction of the Poodle and detailed design will begin for Storey Park (the adjacent project on the south side of the Poodle) in January of 2013. NoMa BID staff has identified and documented potential park and micro-park sites for evaluation and prioritization as part of the NoMa Parks Foundation initiative.

Finally, the NoMa BID has received a planning grant in the amount of \$490,000 from Mayor Gray through the DC Office of Planning. Once these funds are received, the NoMa Parks Foundation will be in a position to commence design drawings for the Poodle and further investigate other park opportunities.



A woman sits in natural grasses with her dog

### III. BUDGET

The NoMa Parks Foundation three-year budget covering fiscal years 2013 (partial) through 2015 is set forth below.

#### NoMa Parks Foundation

#### 3-Year Budget: FY13-FY15

	2013	2014	2015
<b>Revenue</b>			
Grants	\$ 490,000	\$ 18,100,000	\$ 200,000
Contributions	\$ 97,500	\$ 125,000	\$ 150,000
Earned income	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 20,000
NoMa BID In-kind Services	\$ 93,320	\$ 47,970	\$ 52,986
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$ 680,820	\$ 18,277,970	\$ 422,986

#### Expenses

##### Management:

Management	\$ 123,320	\$ 218,033	\$ 240,711
Parks Development	\$ 370,000	\$ 5,060,000	\$ 12,757,130
Park Services	\$ 10,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 125,000
Fundraising	\$ 25,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 85,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 528,320	\$ 5,378,033	\$ 13,207,841

\* 3-Year net revenue **\$267,583**

\* Management and fund-raising as a percentage of total expenses **4%**







## **APPENDIX**

- I. Letter from Mayor Vincent Gray
- II. Letter from Karen Wirt, ANC 6C Chair
- III. NoMa Parks in the News
- IV. NoMa Unveils Vision for Public Parks
- V. Mayor Gray Funds NoMa Parks



VINCENT C. GRAY  
MAYOR

September 12, 2012

Robin-Eve Jasper  
President  
NoMa Business Improvement District  
1200 First Street, NE Suite 310  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Jasper:

In the spirit of continuing the strong partnership between the government of the District of Columbia and the NoMa BID, it is my pleasure to inform you that I intend to reprogram \$490,000 to the District of Columbia Office of Planning for the planning and development of the NoMa BID parks project. As you know, my administration is firmly committed to the vision of a *Sustainable DC* – making the District of Columbia the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the United States. Developing parks and open space in NoMa, a neighborhood whose growing population of residents, employees, and neighbors currently lack dedicated recreational amenities, is an important step in achieving that vision.

My *Sustainable DC* vision calls for our neighborhoods to be vibrant, resilient, respectful of the natural environment and my *One City Action Plan* commits to improving the quality of life for all by, among other things, ensuring residents have access to quality recreation options. And so I am firmly committed to ensuring parks and open space are included in the growing mix of land uses in the NoMa neighborhood.

Specifically, reprogramming budget to the Office of Planning will enable further assessment of the potential and feasibility of neighborhood sites that have been identified to be included in the NoMa local open space system. Likewise, through fostering the planning of future public open space, this financial commitment will contribute to designs that enhance private development and establish a distinctive, active, and sustainable public realm.

I am excited to continue working in partnership with the NoMa BID, and planning for the exciting growth and transformation of this neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Vincent C. Gray

Vincent C. Gray



Government of the District of Columbia

## Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C

October 22, 2012

Chairman Phil Mendelsohn  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: NoMa design, comments from ANC 6C

Dear Mr. Mendelsohn:

At its regularly scheduled, duly noticed monthly meeting on October 10, 2012, ANC 6C voted 8-0, with a quorum present, to support the NoMa Public Realm Plan, as presented by the NoMa BID, as it relates to potential parks at 3rd & N NE and 1st & L NE.

The NoMa neighborhood is one of the fastest-growing regions of the country, and has attracted thousands of new residents, workers and visitors over the past several years. Over 2,000 apartment units have been built in the past five years within NoMa, over 1,000 units are under construction, and thousands more are planned for the coming years.

Unfortunately, this area does not have any public parkland of any kind: no playgrounds, playing fields, or gathering spaces. The neighborhood has used private land for many events, but these spaces are rapidly disappearing due to the fast pace of development.

The District has invested millions of dollars in this area, including for a new Metro station, streetscape improvements, a grocery store, and hundreds of affordable housing units both complete and under construction. Building new parks in NoMa will reinforce these investments, encourage more positive growth, and improve the daily lives of the people who live and work here.

We urge the DC Council to use surplus FY 2012 funds, the FY 2013 budget, or other means to provide public parks in NoMa.

Thank you for giving great weight to the recommendations of ANC 6C.

Cc: Mayor Vincent Gray and  
Members of the Council

On behalf of ANC 6C,

Karen Wirt, ANC 6C chair





## NoMa Parks in the News

### **Washington Business Journal**

*D.C. Commits \$490,000 for NoMa Parks*

By Daniel Sernovitz

September 14, 2012

D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray has earmarked \$490,000 to help develop a network of public parks in NoMa and pledged the support of the District's planning department to oversee the next stage in the process...

### **Washington Post**

*NoMa to get \$490,000 for Park Planning*

By Jonathan O'Connell

September 14, 2012

Developers and planners of the District's NoMa neighborhood, behind Union Station, are enjoying an incredible wave of construction but have long wrung their hands over the area's lack of green space.

Officials from the District government and the NoMa Business Improvement District have looked for ways of accumulating enough land to build a large central park. But with so much of the neighborhood already pegged for development, the BID's new president, Robin-Eve Jasper, decided to push for a network of smaller places for public gatherings, dog walks, relaxation, playgrounds and limited recreation...

### **DCist**

*NoMa Gets \$490,000 From D.C. For New Parks*

By Benjamin Freed

September 14, 2012

The District plans to spend nearly half a million dollars on the greening of NoMa, the constantly under-construction neighborhood that is long on new, glassy office towers, but short on recreational space. Mayor Vince Gray announced \$490,000 in public funding for a network of parks to be installed in NoMa over the coming years in a letter earlier this week to Robin-Eve Jasper, the president of the NoMa Business Improvement District. The D.C. funds will go toward developing the BID's \$50 million parks development plan, which envisions filling NoMa with a smattering of postage-stamp-size green spaces to complement the usual sights of construction cranes and corporate buildings...


### **DCMud**

*New Parks Plan for NoMa*

By Erin Bridges

April 22, 2012

NoMa BID released its new Public Realm Vision Plan Friday night for the growing community of residents, shops and offices. The vision includes three parks and a "modern, monumental gateway." With 1,200 apartments already leased and 2,200 more under construction, there are plenty of residents looking for space to relax, play, and interact. The vision offers ways to create the space they need...



## NoMa Unveils Vision for Public Parks

*Washington, DC, April 20, 2012* – At NoMa’s snazzy Annual Showcase last night, the NoMa Business Improvement District (BID) unveiled a strategic vision for creating a network of parks in NoMa, now the fastest growing neighborhood in Washington, D.C. The need for parks, gathering spaces and green spaces has become even more critical as NoMa shifts from an office-dominated submarket to a lively and livable neighborhood, with more than 3,500 apartment units completed or under construction now.

For the first time in public, NoMa BID President Robin-Eve Jasper unveiled the conceptual designs for three new parks in NoMa and the early concepts for a modern, monumental gateway at the New York Avenue/Florida Avenue/First Street intersection. NoMa stakeholders have collaborated for the last few years to identify sites and financing approaches for this initiative. That public input culminated in an October charrette led by the American Planning Association and the BID, attended by Councilmember Tommy Wells, APA Chairman Paul Farmer and a number of neighborhood residents, stakeholders and city officials. With the results of that charrette, the NoMa BID hired international design and planning firm AECOM to conduct additional stakeholder interviews, then create a more concrete vision for this much-needed parks network.

“Simply put, the vision is inspiring,” said Jasper last night. “Everyone knows that this great NoMa neighborhood needs great parks, and taking these ideas to the NoMa property owners and city leaders has created a lot of excitement already.” Jasper cautioned that these ideas are a vision, and there are many details to be worked out. However, all the property owners adjacent to the affected parcels have been approached, and many are considering ways they can incorporate the NoMa parks ideas into their own future developments.

In short, the Public Realm Vision Plan focuses on the four following sites:

1. The Plaza: A public gathering space at First and L Streets, NE
2. The Tracks: A recreation and train-watching venue between the railroad tracks and Second Street, NE at K Street, NE
3. A casual neighborhood park at Florida Avenue and N Street, NE
4. The Gateway: To enliven and add color to the intersection of New York and Florida Avenues and First Street, NE, the plan envisions large, colorful obelisk-type structures greeting residents and visitors on their way to and from NoMa and Washington, D.C.

Legislation has been introduced by Councilmember Wells in the DC Council that would provide the needed funds. NoMa is grateful for the support of Councilmember Wells and members of Mayor Gray’s administration, including DC Department of Parks and Recreation Director Jesús Aguirre, who attended last night’s event.

### *About NoMa*

NoMa is a vibrant, growing neighborhood north of Union Station and the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. In the last seven years, private developers have invested more than \$6 billion in the 35-block area covered by the NoMa BID, and have plans to develop more than 20 million square feet of office, residential, hotel, and retail space. NoMa is now home to 45,000 daytime workers, with 4.5 million SF leased in the last 4.5 years. More than 3,500 apartments have been recently completed or are under construction. NoMa has 15 modes of transportation, including two Red Line Metro stops, and the best biking facilities in DC, with the only East Coast Bikestation, the 8-mile Met Branch Trail, and access to eight Capital Bikeshare stations. NoMa is the most connected neighborhood in Washington, D.C. For more information about NoMa, visit [www.nomabid.org](http://www.nomabid.org) and sign up for our bimonthly newsletter. Follow us on Twitter @NoMaBID; or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nomabid](http://www.facebook.com/nomabid).

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## Mayor Gray Funds NoMa Parks Public Meeting Garner Input from Neighbors

*Washington, D.C., September 13, 2012* – Mayor Vincent Gray has dedicated \$490,000 for the design and development of NoMa parks, to be handled through the DC Office of Planning. The NoMa Business Improvement District announced the exciting news at Wednesday’s community meeting, where neighborhood stakeholders and residents were gathered to provide input on the NoMa Parks Plan. The news was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

“My administration is firmly committed to the vision of a Sustainable DC – making the District of Columbia the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the United States,” said Mayor Gray in a letter to NoMa BID President Robin-Eve Jasper. “Developing parks and open space in NoMa, a neighborhood whose growing population of residents, employees, and neighbors currently lack dedicated recreational amenities, is an important step in achieving that vision.”

Robin-Eve Jasper emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships to creating and invigorating public spaces, and thanked the Mayor and private developers for their support.

“We are delighted with the support and leadership that Mayor Gray has demonstrated on NoMa Parks issues,” Jasper said. “This funding is essential and will allow us to continue the collaboration with public agencies and private-sector developers in NoMa who are looking at ways to enable the creation of much-needed public gathering spaces here. The NoMa parks effort will ensure NoMa neighborhood residents and workers can enjoy the public recreational amenities that are available in other areas of the city.”

The NoMa Parks Plan has also received strong support from Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells, who attended Wednesday’s meeting and commented on the significance of the Mayor’s action. Wells has introduced legislation that provides additional funds to create more public space in the neighborhood. “This plan goes to show how much vision you can bring to a neighborhood. Where little in the way of public space and parks existed just a few years ago, the partnership between the city, the BID and the neighborhood is turning vision into reality,” Wells said.

The NoMa BID has been working since last winter on a strategic parks plan with design firm AECOM, and the planning effort has involved continuous coordination with District public agencies, including Office of Planning and the Department of Transportation.

“The NoMa BID has used a lot of its own funds and spent a considerable amount on creating strategies and plans for NoMa parks,” said NoMa BID Chairman Bruce Baschuk. Wednesday’s meeting was an important milestone in the parks planning process, and enabled neighborhood residents to give their input into the proposed uses, design and programming of potential park spaces and green spaces in NoMa. The greater NoMa neighborhood is in dire need of such public spaces; with 45,000 office workers and 3,500 residential units completed or under construction, that need grows more imperative each year.

The BID will use these funds for design, and eventually hopes to purchase land and then build a network of parks in NoMa. Reprogramming these funds through the Office of Planning will enable the parks planning team to further assess neighborhood sites that have been identified for future parks, according to the Mayor’s letter.

For more information on the NoMa Parks plan, please review Part One and Part Two of the plan.

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