

New York Avenue , NE Corridor, Washington, DC

Florida Avenue NE & S. Dakota Avenue NE

Students
Reinventing
Cities

The New York Avenue NE Corridor is located northeast of Downtown. It stretches for approximately 3 miles between Florida Avenue NE and South Dakota Avenue NE. It is a major auto-oriented gateway into the city, with approximately 100,000 vehicles moving through the area every day and limited public transit options.

DC's Mayor has set ambitious goals for more affordable housing, and development along the corridor could support them. The goal is to deliver as many as 33,000 new housing units, with at least 1/3 of these being affordable. Regeneration should yield a vibrant residential and jobs-rich, low-carbon, mixed-use corridor. It should be inclusive of new affordable and market-rate housing units, supported by sustainable infrastructure and community facilities.

Regeneration will need to preserve some of the character and activity of the existing light industrial (or PDR – Production, Distribution & Repair) uses. This presents an opportunity for innovative and unique design responses, and to maintain some of the heritage and integrity of the area.

Any framework for this area should consider how to reduce emissions and promote climate resilience while strengthening connectivity, walkability, and urban design transitions to adjacent communities and open space networks, as well as the racial and social equity conditions necessary for long-term social resilience. Robust and sustainable transportation, utility, and civic facility infrastructure, along with public amenities, are critical to unlocking the corridor's full potential.

For this site, students can choose to develop a high-level framework or masterplan for the entire site, which may include some details on some more specific solutions, such as massing, open space and building type studies. Or, students can choose to design a more detailed response for one or more of these subareas, (possibly working in coordinated teams so that all 3 subareas are covered): 1: Union Market-Eckington; 2: Ivy City; 3: Gateway.



Cyclists in Ivy City on Okie Street NE (one block south of NY Ave NE), image by [Joe Flood](#)

Approx. site area:

105 hectares (250 acres), along the 3-mile corridor.

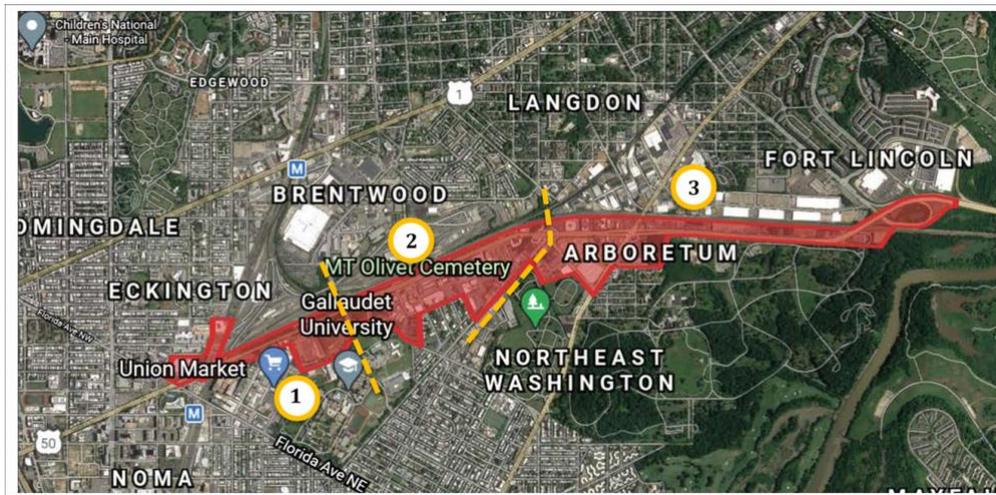
Demographics:

Area is home to a variety of industrial and service jobs and a pocket of residents in the Ivy City subarea. The site sits within the larger Upper Northeast Planning Area, with a more complete view of demographics [here](#): [\(see pg. 9\)](#)

Priority areas & main City expectations:

City expectations include delivering on the housing goals in a way that delivers a strong climate outcome. Emphasis should be placed on delivering a safe, sustainable public realm and active transport network, and employing green infrastructure and buildings to support vibrant neighbourhoods.

Presentation of the site



New York Avenue NE is a major gateway into Washington, DC. The site stretches along the approximately 3-mile length of the New York Avenue Corridor, from Florida Avenue NE to South Dakota Avenue NE. It currently functions as a vital goods movement corridor and a major commuter route. Today it extends through an area that is home to a variety of industrial and service jobs. The site's northern edge is bounded by a railway line (with only 3 crossings) and associated infrastructure, warehouse district, and big-box retail complex. To the south are large institutional open spaces (arboretum and cemetery), Gallaudet University, the rapidly redeveloping mixed-use Union Market district, and moderate-density residential neighborhoods. The area consists of a wide range of building typologies which consistently conform to low-scale, large-footprint buildings – a design that primarily serves warehousing, distribution and manufacturing uses. The area's transportation network and streetscapes are largely defined by New York Avenue's significant vehicle throughput and commuting patterns, in addition to its role in providing freight access and movement for industrial areas along this grade-level highway.

Over the next 30 years, the New York Avenue Corridor is planned to undergo a significant transformation as traditional urban warehousing and manufacturing grow less financially viable due to rising property values and other key factors in the ongoing evolution and growth of the District. The Mayor's proposed [Comprehensive Plan Update](#) (which currently awaits adoption by the DC Council, lays out a new vision for this corridor. This vision emphasizes a diversification of employment opportunities along with development of new housing opportunities - affordable to a wide range households. These changes are needed to equitably accommodate the city's anticipated demographic, physical and economic growth. However, the existing light industrial uses cannot just be displaced through a sudden, one-time change in land use; we must think about how to accommodate those critical uses, while also supporting gradual redevelopment. Policy goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan prioritize equity, resilience, excellence in urban design, and multi-modal mobility options for this area as it undergoes this critical transition in form and function.

Successful transformation of the corridor from today's warehousing, distribution, and manufacturing functions to a set of vibrant residential and mixed-use, jobs-rich neighborhoods will require significant investment in public infrastructure. This investment should be targeted at creating a multi-modal transportation network and enhanced civic facilities, including libraries and parks, that can effectively and, in a timely fashion, serve growing resident and worker populations along the corridor.

Students can choose to develop a high-level framework or masterplan for the entire site, which may include some details on some more specific solutions, such as massing, open space and building type studies. Or, students can choose to design a more detailed response for one or more of the subareas shown below, (possibly working in coordinated teams so that all 3 subareas are covered): 1: Union Market-Eckington; 2: Ivy City; 3: Gateway

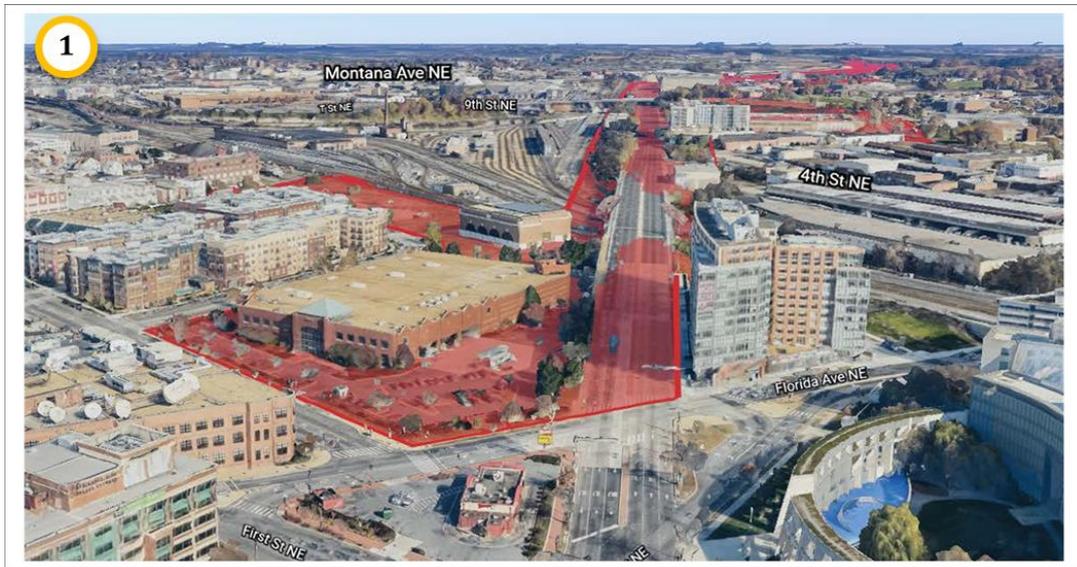


Figure 1: Subarea 1, view looking west from New York Ave. bridge towards Downtown



Figure 2: Subarea 2, view of Hecht Warehouse (recently converted to apartments) in Ivy city



Figure 3: Subarea 3, view looking east

City climate priorities and specific environmental issues to address

Mayor Bowser has pledged to make Washington, DC carbon-neutral and climate resilient by 2050. By joining 25 other C40 member cities in committing to this goal, Washington, DC is building on its [Sustainable DC](#) and [Clean Energy DC](#) plans to cut carbon emissions by 50 percent by 2032. The previous goal was an 80 percent reduction by 2050; now, the city will develop and begin to implement a roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100 percent. The commitment to become carbon-neutral and climate resilient by 2050 is one of many actions the Bowser Administration has taken to prepare for climate change and ensure Washington, DC is sustainable and resilient for future generations. Since coming into office, the Administration:

- launched [Climate Ready D.C](#)
- released a draft of the [Clean Energy DC](#) plan to cut carbon emissions with renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- established the [DC Green Bank](#) which will help create jobs, expand solar power, lower energy costs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- finalized the largest municipal wind power purchase agreement deal of its kind in the United States;
- began work on the largest onsite municipal solar generation in the country; and
- released [Resilient DC](#) - (a tactical implementation strategy that brings together and aligns other major planning efforts into one coordinated effort to confront the complex challenges of the 21st century .

Below are excerpts of a few of the environmental priorities (adapted from various C40 “Reinventing Cities” resources) most relevant to the New York Avenue NE Corridor site and its future as a thriving, green corridor:

Close to home

Washington, DC is home to thousands of households that are severely burdened by housing costs. This increases the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and deferred medical care, and produces effects across racial and social equity, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability domains. Mayor Bowser’s housing goals of 36,000 new housing units by 2025 address affordability by establishing geographic targets for increasing the supply of both market rate and affordable housing units across the city. Projects should maximize market and affordable housing units close to employment opportunities, neighborhood serving retail, civic uses, open space amenities, and transit. Innovative, energy-efficient building types should accommodate a broad range of household types, address the potential quality-of-life challenges of building along a high-capacity commuter corridor, and explore the design challenges of building in the constrained, linear zone alongside the railway tracks.

Active mobility and connected places

Projects should facilitate and encourage walking, cycling, public transport, shared vehicles and electric and other low-emission vehicles and de-incentivize the use of fossil fuel transport. Proposals should go beyond 'Business-As-Usual' to demonstrate exemplary standards of green mobility to reduce energy consumption related to transport, contribute to clean air standards, and unlock potential for greater densities along the corridor. The corridor could serve as a test area for high-capacity electrified bus rapid transit¹ more adaptable and easier to implement than an extension of the subway system.

¹ https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/sustainability/upload/Wmata_Zero_Emission_Bus_Update-02122020-FINAL.pdf; <https://wamu.org/story/18/04/23/hear-no-diesel-smell-no-diesel-d-c-debuts-electric-circulator-buses/>; and <https://dcist.com/story/19/09/23/climate-change-is-already-impacting-the-regions-public-transit/>

Combined with a robust mix of uses and amenities, active mobility and improved connectivity can support individually sustainable lifestyles and the aspirations of a “15-minute city”.

A Place for Everyone

Equity is a critical DC value, defined by the [District’s Comprehensive Plan Framework Element](#) ; see pg. 32-34) as when race no longer drives disparities or life outcomes for District residents, and everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live, or their socioeconomic status. Project teams should understand the diverse existing neighborhood contexts along the corridor so that the project is responsive to major needs, challenges and issues of residents and businesses. Projects should be welcoming and accessible to different parts of the population (social background, race, age, gender, origin, economic status, etc.), prioritizing mixed-used development, and promoting projects and activities that actively support citizen health and wellness. A variety of open spaces should encourage a spectrum of activities (both active and passive) and set the stage for a vibrant public life. Climate resilience and adaptation are intrinsically equity issues since vulnerable populations are more negatively impacted by a more extreme climate and less able to withstand the shocks and pressures of disasters. Therefore, in order to build a more equitable District, we must build a more resilient city.

Green space & nature-based solutions

Projects should consider developing green and blue infrastructure to maintain and promote urban biodiversity, to provide important ecosystem services such as pollination and climate resilience, to mitigate heat island effect and to reduce energy needed to cool and heat buildings (e.g. green roof and wall gardens). This could also include development of local and sustainable food systems (urban agriculture) in order to decrease food miles and to raise awareness about the benefits of fresh, seasonal food and local production.

Green Building

The following are some principles, guidelines and expectations about energy, building and clean construction that are critical to GHG Emission reductions in new construction:

[Green building](#) is an integral part of DC’s sustainable development strategy, as an approach to design, construction and operations that conserves resources while it protects human health. Green buildings use less energy, consume fewer natural resources such as water and forest products, and emit fewer pollutants into the environment. DC is a national leader in green building which supports the vision set forth in the *Sustainable DC Plan*. The [Green Building Act of 2006](#) requires that all non-residential District public buildings meet the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED certification standards for environmental performance at the “Silver” level or higher. City-owned or financed residential projects 10,000 square feet or larger must meet or exceed the [Green Communities](#) certification standard. Since January 2012, all new private development projects 50,000 square feet or larger are now required to meet LEED certification at the “Certified” level or higher.

Consideration should also be given to Landscape and site design which can help reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, and keep the city cooler. [The Green Area Ratio](#) is an environmental sustainability zoning regulation that sets standards for these goals.

Other expectations for the site’s redevelopment

Establishing a framework that can drive and guide orderly and predictable redevelopment of the corridor is paramount. The framework will establish a vision for the area and key investments that need to occur. In the absence of a coordinated vision, an inefficient, incremental and uncoordinated approach could yield a muddled and costly process for property owners, community stakeholders, and public agencies, resulting in an urban fabric that is less coherent, equitable, vibrant, and successful. The

city is looking for innovative ideas for the corridor that can help to inform and structure a more formalized planning process and engagement strategy expected to begin within the next few years.

Given the large size of the study area, students may choose to focus on the entire corridor, on one of the three sub-areas shown in the accompanying plan and aerial views, or divide the studio into three sections:

Area 1: Union Market-Eckington

The area between the Florida Avenue intersection and the 9th Street overpass is the gateway to Downtown. The elevated approach opens up views towards the monumental core. The lively Union Market district and Gallaudet University lie just south of the corridor. Just north, a narrow strip of land separates the roadway from the railyard; and west of the tracks is the Metropolitan Branch Trail running alongside the recently opened Alethia Tanner Park.

Area 2: Ivy City

The area between the 9th Street overpass and the Montana Avenue NE intersection (circle), known as Ivy City, backs up to the expansive Mt. Olivet Cemetery. This formerly industrial zone, home to warehouses and factories alongside the railyard, has recently seen building conversions to apartments, retail, restaurants, bars and distilleries.

Area 3: Gateway

The area between the Montana Avenue NE circle and the South Dakota Avenue NE looping intersection is the gateway into the District of Columbia from neighboring Maryland. To the north is a warehouse district bisected by the railway tracks and a suburban-style big-box shopping center, the first thing one sees upon entering DC from the east. To the south is the 450-acre U.S. National Arboretum, a free-to-enter regional attraction. The entire length is crossed by only one north-south intersection, Bladensburg Road NE.

While each sub-area has its distinct character, the following expectations apply throughout:

- Maximized housing (33,000 units) & affordability (with at least 1/3 of these affordable) shared across the entire 3-mile corridor
- High-density, mixed-use corridor to support employment opportunities
- Innovative, adaptable corridor transit: electrified bus rapid transit
- Multi-mobility options
- Green infrastructure (tree canopy, stormwater, heat island mitigation, etc)
- Sustainable, welcoming, active and resilient public realm
- Low-carbon, green buildings and public spaces
- Flexibility and adaptability over time
- Physical, social and programmed connections to surrounding communities
- Walkable, comfortable, safe streets (15-min city)
- Civic infrastructure (public space, schools, amenities) to support vibrant neighborhoods
- Neighborhood amenities (retail, food access, culture, entertainment, etc)
- Gateway experience reflecting the importance of the significant east-west entry into the city

Specific city planning rules and regulations

Land Use:

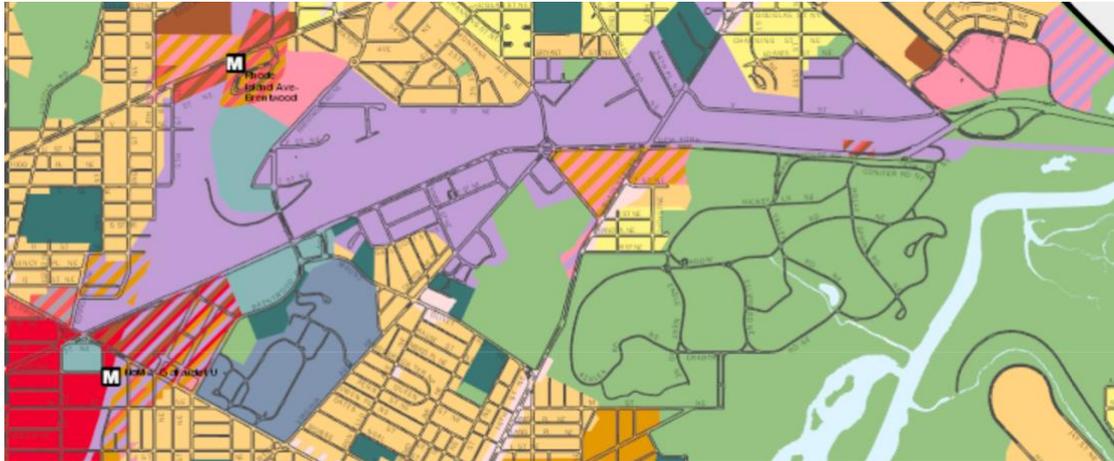


Figure 5: Existing [Future Land Use Map \(FLUM\)](#)



Figure 4: Proposed [Future Land Use Map \(FLUM\)](#)

Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use

Land Use Categories

- Residential-Low Density (RLD)
- Residential-Moderate Density (RMOD)
- Residential-Medium Density (RMED)
- Residential-High Density (RHD)
- Commercial-LowDensity (CLD)
- Commercial-Moderate Density (CMOD)
- Commercial-Medium Density (CMED)
- Commercial-High Density (CHD)
- Institutional (INST)
- Federal (FED)
- Local Public Facilities (LPUB)
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS)
- Production & Technical Employment (PROTECH)
- Water
- Mixed Uses

The Mayor’s draft Comp Plan is proposing land use changes to a portion of New York Avenue extending east from Florida Avenue to South Dakota Avenue, but also proposes that this be guided by a planning analysis to ensure adequate planning for equitable growth and evaluation of current and future infrastructure needs. The city intends to analyze the potential effects of those changes and make cross systems recommendations on housing, transportation, and economic development to achieve the positive benefits. The proposed changes to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM), shown above, indicate a potential for significant change in both density and land use mix for the New York Avenue NE Corridor.

The New York Avenue Corridor is generally bounded by other industrial designated and zoned lands plus some park and Federal uses.

Zoning:

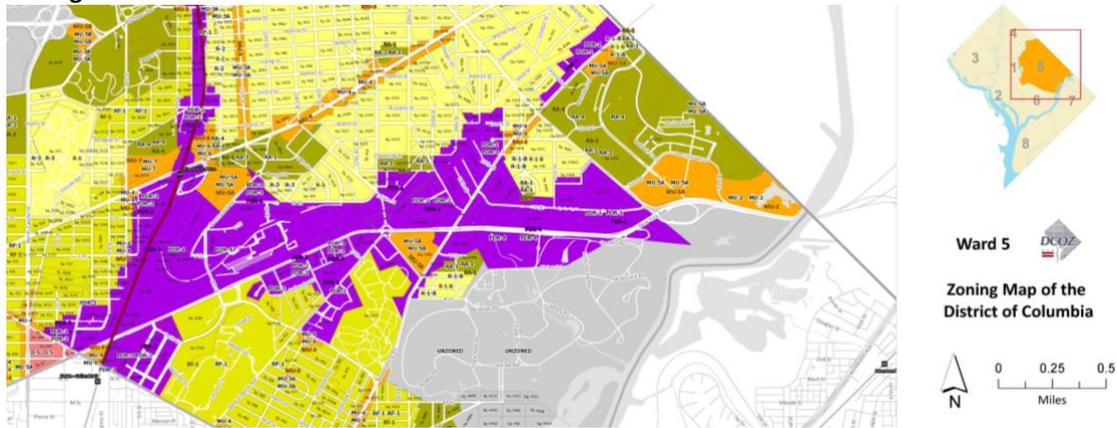


Figure 5: [Zoning Map](#)

Ward 5 Zoning Districts

-  Pending Planned Unit Developments
-  Final Planned Unit Developments
-  Residential Zone
-  Residential Flat Zone
-  Residential Apartment Zone
-  Mixed-Use Zone
-  Neighborhood Mixed-Use Zone
-  Downtown Zone
-  Production, Distribution, and Repair Zone
-  Unzoned

For context, the existing Zoning Regulations describing the designations shown on the map above can be found [here](#)... Note that the proposed Future Land Use Map (FLUM) indicates anticipated future changes to this Zoning Map, incorporating high-density mixed use residential and commercial along the corridor. Students should utilize the anticipated FLUM designations to guide their proposals.

Public Realm: The District’s public space is a valuable asset worthy of our stewardship and - with the help of all residents and property owners – is one of the unique features that makes our city great. This [Public Realm Design Manual, 2019](#) is a resource for learning about the importance of the District’s public space, the regulations that guide its use and form, and the rationale behind them. Property owners are required to maintain the public space adjacent to their property, so it is important that these ideas are understood clearly. Beginning with the L’Enfant Plan and continuing to today, Washington, DC has a notable history of using public space to define the city and give character and grace to neighborhoods. From inspirational views of the Capitol along leafy avenues to neighborhood networks of small green spaces, parks, schoolyards and recreation centers, to commercial boulevards with sidewalk cafes and street festivals – these defining characteristics of our public space are not the result of happenstance. Rather, it is the result of thoughtful planning, regulation and long-standing traditions of enhancing the public right-of-way. Today, the District Department of Transportation reviews approximately 6,000 public space permits annually to ensure that the interest of the public is protected.

Building Heights: DC has strictly regulated height limits, as described in [the Height Act Master Plan, 2013](#). See pgs 3-4 for current policy; the remainder of document contains recommendations that were considered but not implemented. Students may attempt to meet the project goals within the limits of current height regulations, or they may speculate on deviations from the current regulations to meet project goals if articulated with a clear and thoughtful rationale.

Reference materials :

- [Comprehensive Plan Update, 2020](#) (not yet adopted by Council)
 - [The Future Land Use Map \(FLUM\)](#) gives a good sense of anticipated land uses (current and future), as currently proposed.
 - [The Urban Design Element](#) describes the District’s goal to enhance the beauty, equity, and livability of the city by reinforcing its historic design legacy and the diversity of its neighborhoods and centers, harmoniously integrating new construction with existing buildings and the natural environment, and improving the vitality, appearance, and function of streets and public spaces
 - [The Upper Northeast Area Element](#) provides an overview of the 8.7 square miles that comprise the Upper Northeast Planning Area (the area that contains the New York Ave NE Corridor), including its demographics, main land use composition, major landmarks, institutions, open spaces, and commercial areas. Upper Northeast is one of the most diverse Planning Areas in terms of land uses with the largest concentration of industrial land in the District.
- [Housing Equity Report, 2019](#). Background on Mayor’s housing goals.
- [New York Ave- Florida Ave NE Public Life Study, 2020](#)
- [New York Ave- Florida Ave NE Intersection, Current Design \(In process\), 2020](#)
- [Alethia Tanner Park](#), recently opened, 2020
- [Resilient DC, 2019](#)
- [Climate Ready DC](#)
- [Sustainable DC 2.0, 2019](#)
- **Move DC, 2014**
 - [Exec. Summary:](#)
 - [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
- [Public Realm Design Manual, 2019](#)
- [Height Act Master Plan, 2013](#). See pgs 3-4 for current policy; remainder of document contains recommendations that were considered but not implemented. It will be up to the discretion of the project team to follow current height regulations or to thoughtfully exceed them, based on a defensible and articulated rationale.