



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: April 6, 2017

PROJECT Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements N/A Between 10th Street and Maine Avenue, SW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7551 NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 24.13(70.00)44520 APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary and final site development plans PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary and final site development plans ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation
SUBMITTED BY United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) in cooperation with NCPC and in collaboration with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and Hoffman-Madison Waterfront (the Wharf) has submitted plans for a staircase and ramp connection at Banneker Park, an NPS property located at the southern terminus of 10th Street, SW. Banneker Park was designed by Dan Kiley, a significant landscape architect, and constructed between 1967 and 1969. Banneker Park was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites in 2012.

The purpose of the project is to provide a safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing interim pedestrian and bicycle connection to improve connectivity and access between 10th Street, SW, and the southwest waterfront. The project is needed because currently there is limited pedestrian and bicycle access between the waterfront, 10th Street, SW (also known as L'Enfant Promenade), the National Mall, and surrounding areas. The project is being implemented, designed, and constructed as part of the first-stage planned unit development known as the Wharf. Both the 2010 *National Mall Plan* and the 2013 *SW Ecodistrict Plan*, recognize the need for improved pedestrian and bicycle access between the National Mall and the southwest waterfront. As part of the *SW Ecodistrict Planning* process, the SW Ecodistrict Task Force, led by NCPC, developed design concepts for 10th Street, SW and the Interim Banneker Connection. The NPS and the Wharf further developed these design concepts and completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Assessment of Effects Report (AOE) for the proposed connection. The project is anticipated to be an interim improvement which could be in place for 10 years as the area awaits future redevelopment associated with the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* or memorial and museum sites.

The project includes a stairway constructed on the west side of Banneker Park, which terminates at Maine Avenue, SW near the fish market. In addition, Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility

Standard (ABAAS) compliant ramps traverse the east side of the park to provide access for pedestrians, including persons with disabilities, to the Maine Avenue, SW intersection near the Fish Market as well as the Maine Avenue and 9th Street, SW intersection. Landscaping enhancements include tree plantings to shade pedestrian walkways, removing and replanting Japanese Yew to guide pedestrian traffic to designated cross-walks, removing the rip-rap embankment and stabilizing slopes with low-maintenance groundcover, installing bioretention facilities, and installing lighting along the new stairway and ramps. Wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to and from the Overlook will occur as a separate, but related effort led by the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID). Zimmer Gunsul Frasca (ZGF) Architects LLP is the landscape architect for the project.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Banneker Connection is the first project to be implemented as a result of the SW Ecodistrict Planning work and represents a critical first step towards realizing the Plan's goals. The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* included goals to pioneer environmental performance at a district-scale and reinforce pedestrian connections between the National Mall and the southwest waterfront.
- NCPC accepted the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* in 2013. The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* includes the goal of capturing and reusing all of the rainwater throughout the year and increasing tree canopy cover.
- Banneker Park is the work of Dan Kiley, a significant mid-century modernist landscape architect. Banneker Park was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites in 2012.
- The US Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the Interim Banneker Connection project on November 21, 2013 and the revised concept in May 19, 2016. CFA supported the general location, configuration, and character of the proposed connection, but recommended refining and simplifying the design to be more responsive to Kiley's design for Banneker Overlook. CFA recommended reducing the width of the Maine Avenue, SW sidewalk to reduce the retaining wall height, and recommended using tree plantings to shade the pedestrian walkways and to minimize use of turf grass.
- The Commission reviewed a revised design concept in April 2016 and supported the selection of Alternative B (the NPS and NCPC Preferred Alternative). The Commission's comments are included in the project analysis. Since the Commission's review, several modifications were made to the Preferred Alternative to respond to comments from CFA, the District Department of Transportation, and NCPC.
- The Banneker Connection project would add approximately 10,000 square feet of impervious surface area, mitigated by four bioretention facilities. The project exceeds the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) stormwater requirements, and is generally consistent with Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) recommendations.
- The Commission is a cooperating agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The District of

Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) determined that the preferred alternative would have no adverse effects on Banneker Park's historic resources. NPS and NCPC issued a Finding of No Significant Impact after the close of the public comment period on the Environmental Assessment.

- The Wharf and NPS are currently developing a maintenance agreement for the stormwater facilities and landscape features added as part of this project.
- Wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to Banneker Park and surrounding destinations will occur as a separate, but related effort led by the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID).
- Lighting design for the landscape is in progress. The applicant is considering pedestrian-scaled lights along the staircase and ramps.
- Improvements to the intersection at 9th Street and Maine Avenue, SW are a separate, but related project. This project is approved, permitted, and will be constructed as part of the Wharf's Maine Avenue improvements.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary and final site development plans for the Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements because the project:

- Advances the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* and 10th Street and Interim Banneker Connection planning work.
- Accommodates anticipated increases in pedestrian traffic associated with the Wharf development.
- Provides safe universal accessibility through NPS parkland.
- Improves visitor experience and pedestrian and bicycle connections to the southwest waterfront.
- Is sympathetic to historic resources at Banneker Park.

Commends the applicant's efforts to coordinate the project with NCPC and other stakeholder agencies.

Recommends the applicant consider additional tree plantings to provide shade to park users as well as other environmental benefits, while considering views to the Washington Monument and views contributing to Banneker Park's historic resources.

Encourages coordination wherever possible with local agencies to address universal accessibility on and along 10th Street, particularly connections north of Banneker Overlook to L'Enfant Plaza and Independence Avenue, SW.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	6/6/2013 – Information Presentation 1/9/2014 – Concept Review 4/7/2016 – Revised Concept Review
Remaining actions (anticipated)	None

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The project provides needed improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between 10th Street and the southwest waterfront. This connection, along with DDOT's sidewalk widening and bicycle lane projects will improve connections to the National Mall via 10th Street, to the Francis Case Memorial Bridge, and to the Jefferson Memorial via the Anacostia Riverwalk trail.

The project builds upon the Monumental Core Framework Plan and National Mall Plan goal to improve connections between the National Mall and southwest waterfront. The project is also the outcome of NCPC's *SW Ecodistrict Plan* and Programmatic Design Concept Summary for 10th Street SW and Interim Banneker Connection.

Since the Commission's review of the revised concept plans in April 2016, the applicant has refined the project plans in response to the Commission's comments, CFA's comments, and in consultation with DDOT. These refinements include:

- Elimination of the L-shaped sidewalk that was located in the center median between the access drives, which simplified sidewalk configurations and reduced impervious surfaces.
- Addition of a resting area on the existing sidewalk to the north of the access drive.
- Narrowing the Maine Avenue sidewalk width in order to lower the retaining wall height from 10 feet to 8 feet.
- Inclusion of south and north bound bicycle lanes to provide separated bicycle circulation around the Banneker Overlook.
- Modified tree-planting arrangement to respond to CFA's recommendations.
- Selective restoration of Japanese Yew to guide pedestrian traffic to designated crosswalks.
- Planting of low-maintenance woody ground-cover along with slope stabilization in place of the rip-rap embankment.

The resulting refinements address and respond to review agency comments while maintaining a design that is sympathetic to the historic resources of Banneker Overlook. The project also meets and exceeds DOEE stormwater requirements for the Anacostia Waterfront Development Zone

(AWDZ). While NPS is not subject to the 40% tree canopy cover requirement of the AWDZ, staff would like to see this goal and the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* target of 40% tree cover achieved when the applicant proposes a permanent design for the site. Therefore, staff is recommending the Commission **approve the preliminary and final site development plans for the Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements**.

Analysis

The project must balance historic preservation with needed pedestrian access improvements and environmental performance targets informed by the *SW Ecodistrict Plan*. In order for the applicant to make needed access improvements, minor modifications to the original features of the site are needed. In developing the preliminary and final plans for the project, the applicant has taken into account comments from NCPC, the US Commission of Fine Arts and the District Department of Transportation. The applicant has considered comments in development of their plans, and responded with revisions to the plans, where possible or appropriate. The final plans respect the historic significance of the landscape while providing needed pedestrian and bicycle access improvements. The analysis below is organized by the proposed improvements to pedestrian access, bicycle access, and the landscape.

Pedestrian Access Improvements

In reviewing the revised concept plans, the Commission commented in support of the EA Alternative B (the NPS and NCPC Preferred Alternative) because it best meets the purpose and need for the project while creating a design that is sympathetic to historic resources at Banneker Park. Since the Commission's review of the revised concept plans, the applicant has consulted with DDOT to make minor modifications to proposed pedestrian pathways that meet the DDOT Accessibility Guidelines. These modifications simplify sidewalk and ramp configurations and reduce impervious surface area. In addition, the applicant has responded to CFA's comments to reduce the sidewalk width along Maine Avenue, SW in order to allow for a reduction in retaining wall height. The modifications relating to pedestrian access include:

- Elimination of the L-shaped sidewalk that was located in the center median between the access drives.
- Addition of a resting area on the existing sidewalk to the north of the access drive.
- Narrowing the Maine Avenue sidewalk width in order to lower the retaining wall height from 10 feet to 8 feet.

Staff notes that improvements to the intersection at 9th Street and Maine Avenue, SW are a separate, but related project. This project is approved, permitted, and will be constructed as part of the Wharf's Maine Avenue improvements.

Reiterating previous comments, staff notes that the 10th Street median is not ABAAS-compliant and does not have curb-ramps north of the Banneker Connection project. Staff is requesting that the Commission **encourage coordination wherever possible with local agencies to address**

universal accessibility on and along 10th Street, particularly connections north of Banneker Overlook to L'Enfant Plaza and Independence Avenue, SW.

Bicycle Access Improvements

When reviewing the revised concept plans, the Commission noted that DDOT requested to widen pathways to allow shared-use for bicycles and pedestrians. The Commission recommended that the applicant evaluate shared-use (pedestrian and bicycle) pathways along with designs that separate pedestrian circulation from bicycle traffic. For safety purposes, the Commission recommended the applicant evaluate required widths for pedestrians and bicycles along with turning radii required for buses and vehicles circling around Banneker Overlook.

The applicant consulted with DDOT's ADA and Pedestrian Coordinators regarding the configuration of bicycle and pedestrian circulation around Banneker Overlook. During consultation, it was determined that pedestrian and bicycle pathways could be separated. The final plans include bicycle lanes on the northbound and southbound access lanes and around Banneker Overlook, to better connect the Francis Case Memorial Bridge ramp to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail (shared-use trail) on the south side of Maine Avenue, SW.

Landscape Improvements

In reviewing the revised concept plans, the Commission recommended that the applicant explore design strategies that use the landscape to reveal stormwater management and accentuate the pedestrian experience, especially while descending the stairway to Maine Avenue, SW. The applicant's proposal includes an integrated stormwater feature at the base of the landscape retaining wall, along with three additional bioretention facilities along the Maine Avenue, SW sidewalk.

In accordance with submission guidelines, the Commission requested the applicant to submit a stormwater management plan that complies with DOEE and Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) regulations. A major land disturbing activity of this size requires DOEE stormwater management compliance. Since the site is also located within the Anacostia Waterfront Development Zone (AWDZ), the project must meet additional stormwater management targets. This includes retaining the 90th percentile rainfall event and providing water quality treatment for the 95th percentile rainfall event. DOEE's requirements are similar to EISA regulations, which recommend retaining the 95th percentile rainfall event.

The project increases impervious land cover from approximately 2,900 square feet to 9,600 square feet. The increase in impervious surface area is mitigated by four bioretention facilities (approximately 2,400 square feet in area), which retain and treat approximately 3,300 cubic feet of stormwater. The applicant's stormwater management plan exceeds DOEE's required volumes for on-site stormwater retention and treatment, and is generally consistent with EISA recommendations.

Since the Commission's review of the revised concept plans, the applicant has responded to CFA's comments regarding the landscape planting design to line the pathways with trees to provide shade, consider the addition of massing of Yews as volumetric elements in the landscape, and encourage alternatives to turf grass in the open sloped areas of the site. The modifications relating to landscape design include:

- Modified tree-planting arrangement to provide shade along pathways and resting areas.
- Selective restoration of Japanese Yew to guide pedestrian traffic to designated crosswalks.
- Planting of low-maintenance woody ground-cover along with slope stabilization in place of the rip-rap embankment.

The project adds 69 new trees and does not remove any existing trees, to achieve 25% canopy coverage at 20 years of maturity. The *SW Ecodistrict Plan* set a target of achieving 40% tree canopy cover, and suggested concentrating development of new tree canopy in parks and plazas. DOEE's tree canopy requirement for this area is also 40%. To achieve the 40% cover, the project needs 28 additional trees. Staff notes that while NPS is not required to meet DOEE's tree canopy requirements for the AWDZ, NPS should strive to achieve the 40% tree canopy cover when a permanent design is proposed for the site.

New development on the southwest waterfront will likely increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic through Banneker Park, resulting in increased park use. Landscape improvements to Banneker Park should balance park uses with environmental performance and historic preservation. Therefore, staff suggests that the Commission **recommend the applicant consider additional tree plantings to provide shade to park users as well as other environmental benefits, while considering views to the Washington Monument and views contributing to Banneker Park's historic resources.**

Recommendation Summary

The preliminary and final plans respond to the Commission's comments provided in April 2016. Therefore, staff is recommending the Commission **approve the preliminary and final site development plans for the Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements.** The preliminary and final plans balance the needs of improving pedestrian and bicycle accessibility with preserving the integrity of a historic landscape, and implementing environmental best practices.

Since this has been a multi-year interagency effort, staff requests that the Commission **commend the applicant's efforts to coordinate the project with NCPC and other stakeholder agencies.**

Staff notes that a few elements of the project are currently being refined. The applicant is developing the lighting design, which will include pedestrian-scaled lights along the staircase and pathways. Staff notes that wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to and from the Overlook will occur as a separate, but related effort led by the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID). Staff notes that Banneker Park is an important location along the Potomac Heritage National Scenic, the Southwest Heritage Trail, and the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail and that wayfinding signage should be coordinated with these trails. Finally, staff reminds the applicant that any signage on federal property requires NCPC review.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements are consistent with the *Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan* and is derived from several previous planning efforts including the *SW Ecodistrict Plan* (accepted by the Commission in January of 2013); the *Monumental Core Framework Plan* (2009); and the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* (2001). The concepts illustrate best practices of several of the Comprehensive Plan Elements.

National Historic Preservation Act

NPS and NCPC both have a responsibility to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. NCPC elected to designate NPS as lead agency to satisfy the Commission's Section 106 obligation. NPS initiated consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) on July 20, 2015. In consultation with the DC SHPO and other consulting parties, NPS identified an area of potential effects (APE) and the historic properties located in the APE. As noted above, Banneker Park is the work of Dan Kiley, a significant landscape architect.

NPS hosted Section 106 consulting parties meetings on August 11 and November 12, 2015. Following consulting parties meetings, NPS worked to revise the two alternatives carried forward in the EA and AOE report in response to comments to avoid and minimize adverse effects. On April 21, 2016 the DC SHPO issued a finding of "no adverse effect" provided that the NPS will forward more detailed project plans for review and will incorporate the DC SHPO's comments to the maximum extent feasible.

National Environmental Policy Act

NPS, with NCPC as a cooperating agency, is the lead federal agency responsible for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. On July 20, 2015, NPS announced the start of the public scoping period for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment. On August 11, 2015, NPS hosted a scoping meeting to present the alternatives under consideration and solicit comments from interested members of the public and other agencies. NPS prepared an EA to analyze a range of alternatives including two action and a no action alternative. Topics analyzed in the EA included historic structures and districts including cultural landscapes, water quality, and visitor use and experience. NPS released the EA for public comment on March 31, 2016. NPS issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on July 12, 2016 for Alternative B (the NPS and NCPC preferred alternative). NCPC concurred with NPS and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on March 28, 2017.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its March 15, 2017 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary and final site development plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the District Department of Energy and the Environment, the District Department of Transportation, the General Services Administration, the National Park Service, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The CFA reviewed the project and approved the revised concept design in May 2016. In their approval, CFA provided several comments:

- Expressed appreciation for the responsiveness to their previous advice to simplify the proposal to be more responsive to Banneker Overlook.
- Observed that the width of the Maine Avenue sidewalk is excessive, and that decreasing it by several feet would result in a concomitant reduction in the proposed retaining wall height.
- Recommended several refinements to the landscape plan to include:
 - Lining the pathways with trees to provide shade for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Considering the addition of massing of Yews as volumetric elements in the landscape.
 - Encouraging alternatives to turf grass in the open sloped areas of the site.

The CFA will review the final plans for the project on April 20, 2017.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Submission Package
- Project Summary
- FONSI

Prepared by Meghan Spigle
03/30/2017

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

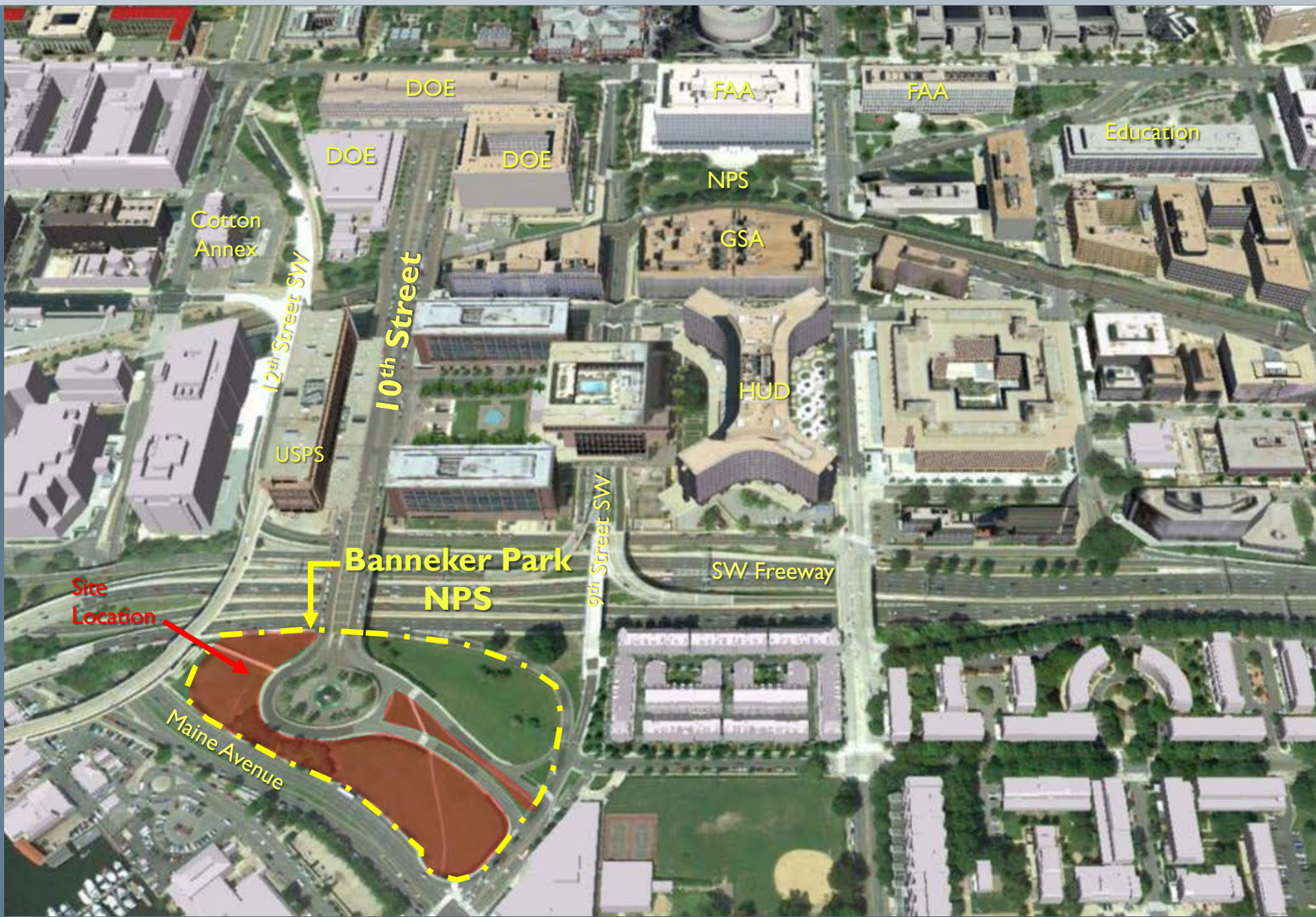
NCPC File #7551: Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements

Benjamin Banneker Park

Submitted by the National Park Service

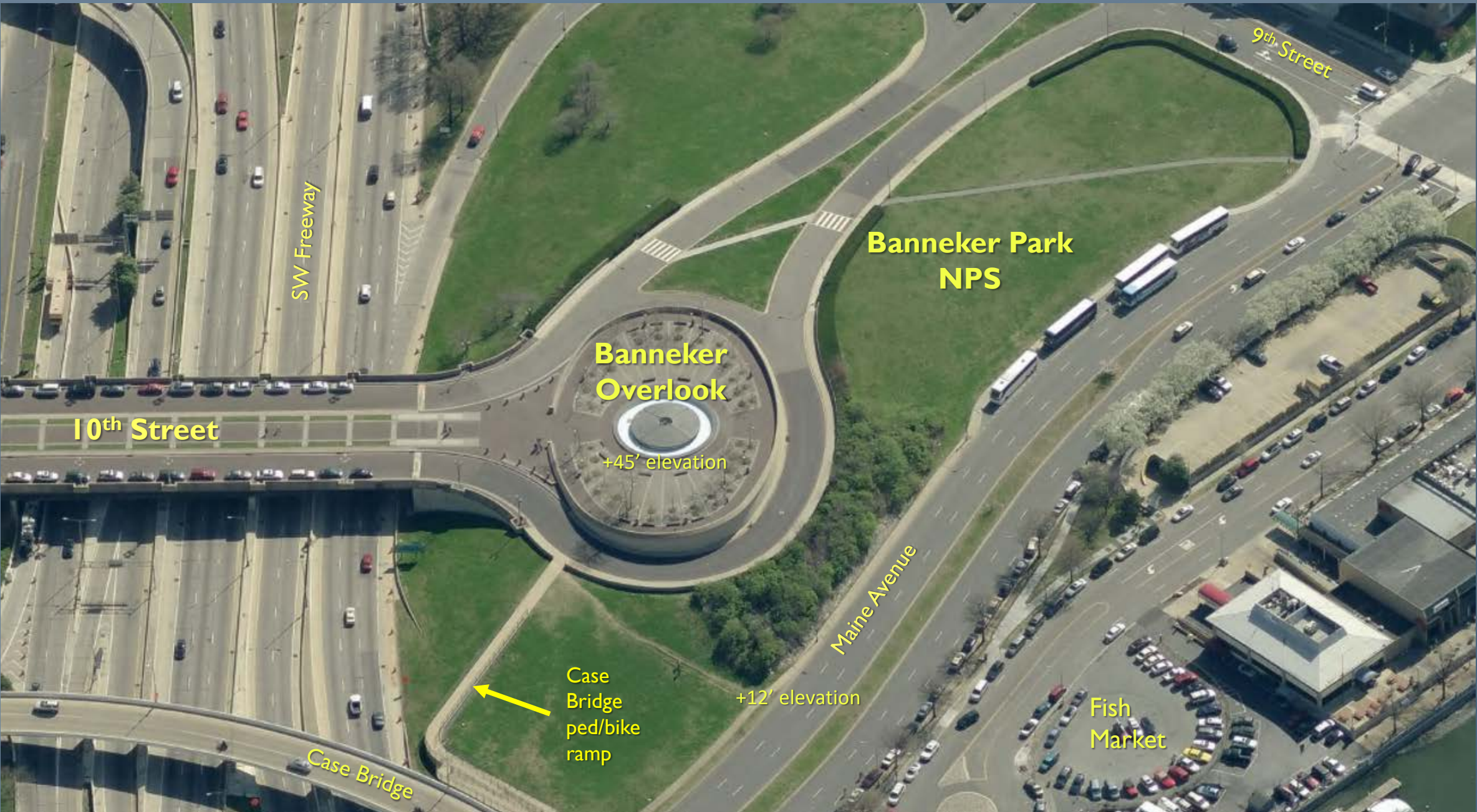
Preliminary & Final Review

April 6, 2017









View of Banneker Overlook from 10th Street, SW



View of Banneker Park from the Case pedestrian bridge



View of Banneker Park from 9th St and Maine Ave, SW



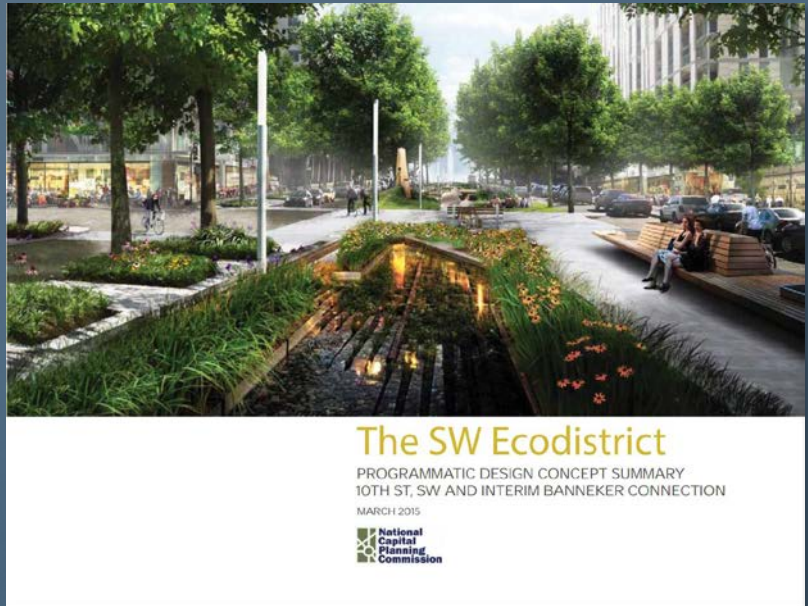
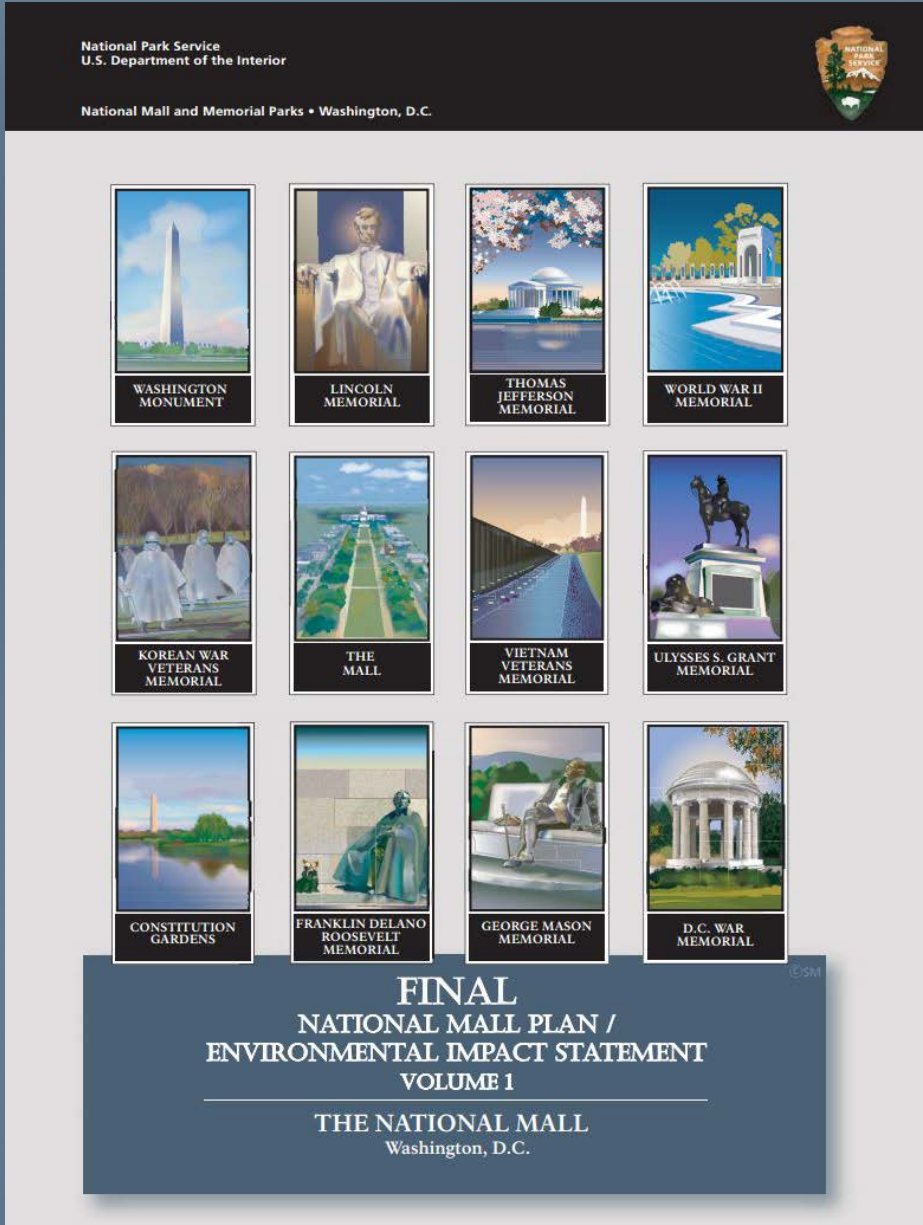
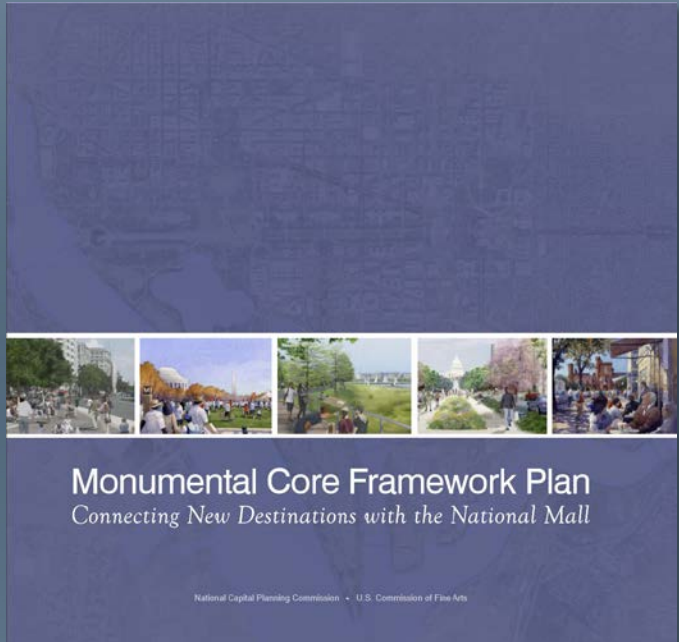
Wharf Site Plan

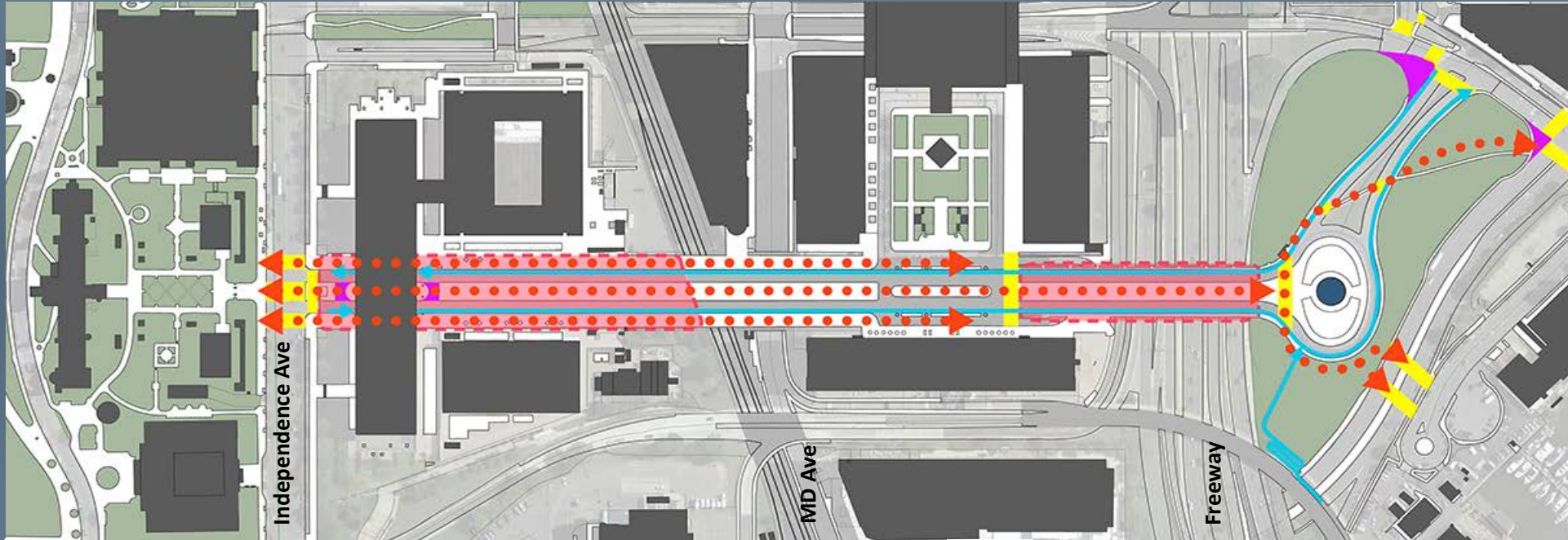


View looking southeast to the Wharf

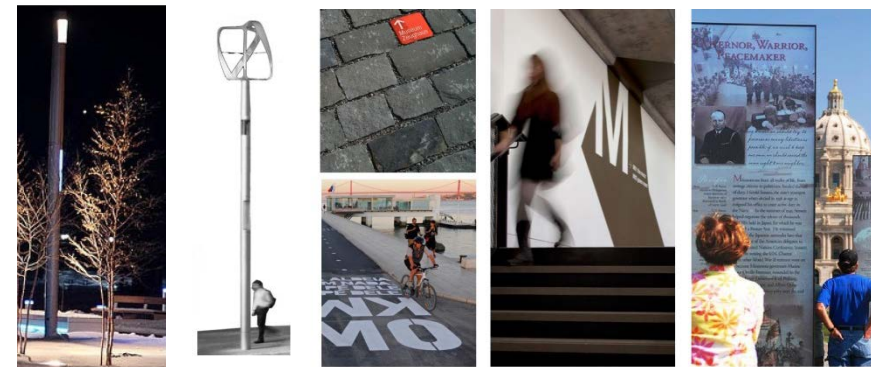


Source: The Wharf



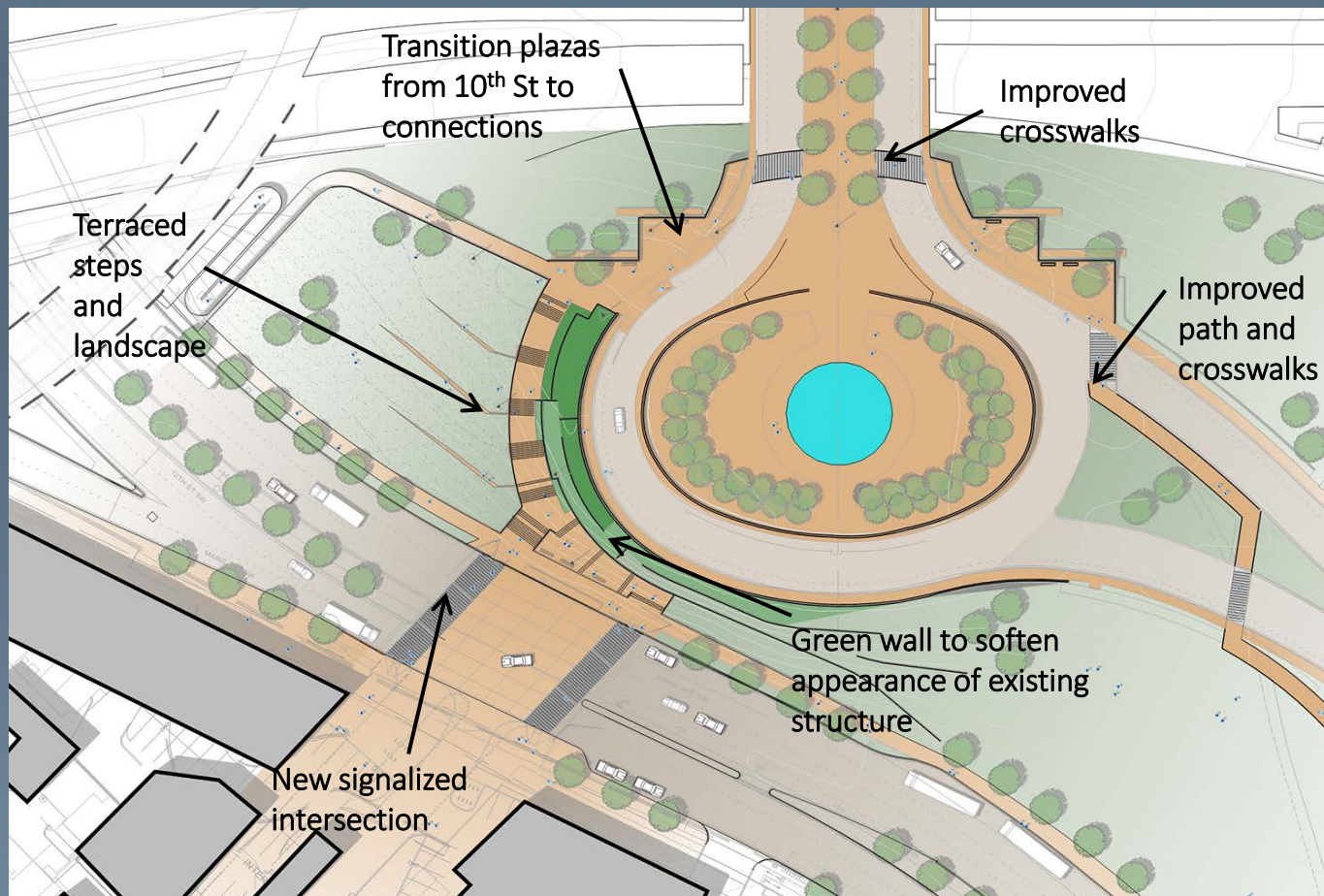


1. **Wayfinding**
 Improvements for entire length
2. **Pedestrian and Bike Safety Improvements**
 Enhanced crosswalks
 Bike Lane
 Potential Lane Modifications
3. **Interim Banneker Connections**
 Stair connection to Fish Market
 Path connection to 9th Street



Potential wayfinding – Vertical and horizontal examples

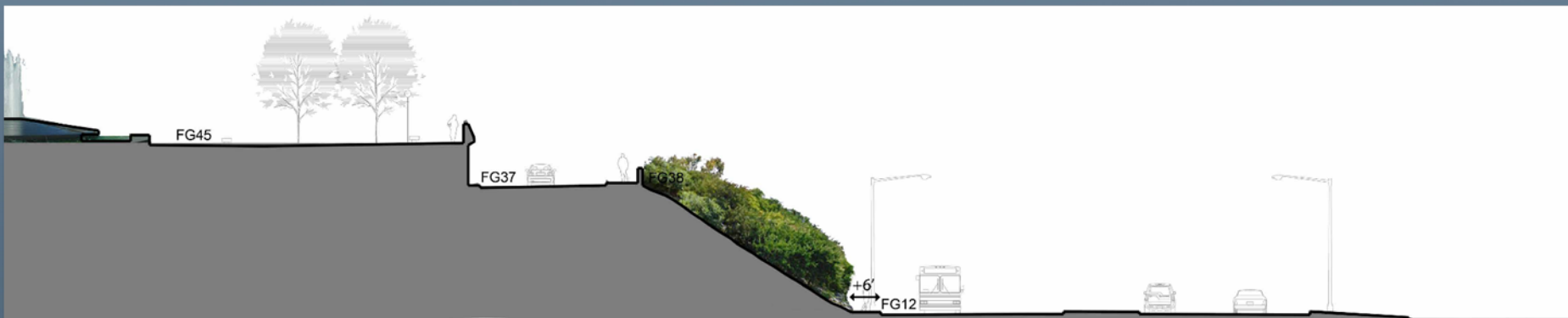
January 2014 Concept for the Interim Banneker Connection



Alternative A



Environmental Assessment: Preferred Alternative



Existing



Proposed

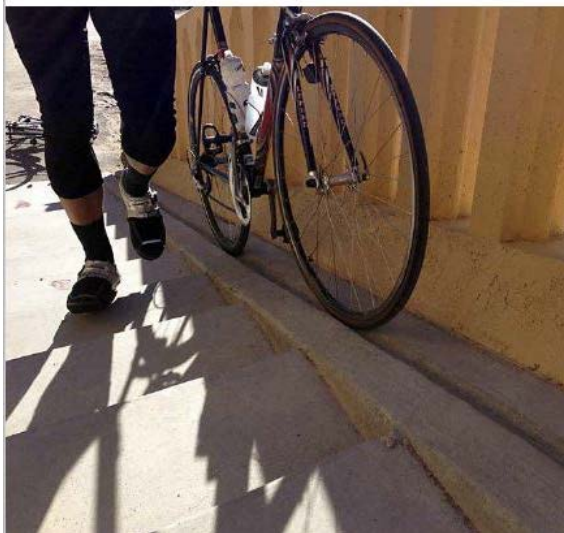


Existing

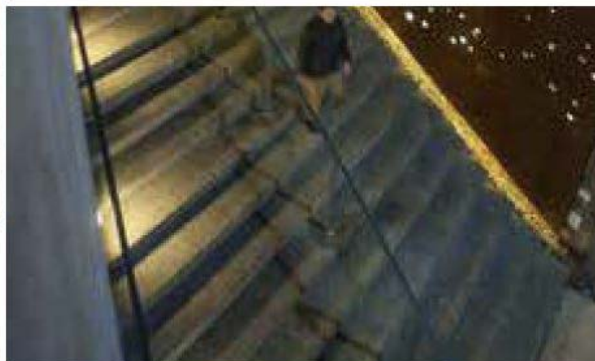


Proposed

Environmental Assessment: Preferred Alternative



Integrated Bicycle Trough



Integrated Lighting



Integrated Stormwater Management



Existing



Proposed



Existing



Proposed

Landscape Plan



 Bicycle Lane

 City Transit Bus



■ ■ ■ Stormwater Facilities

----- Drainage Divides





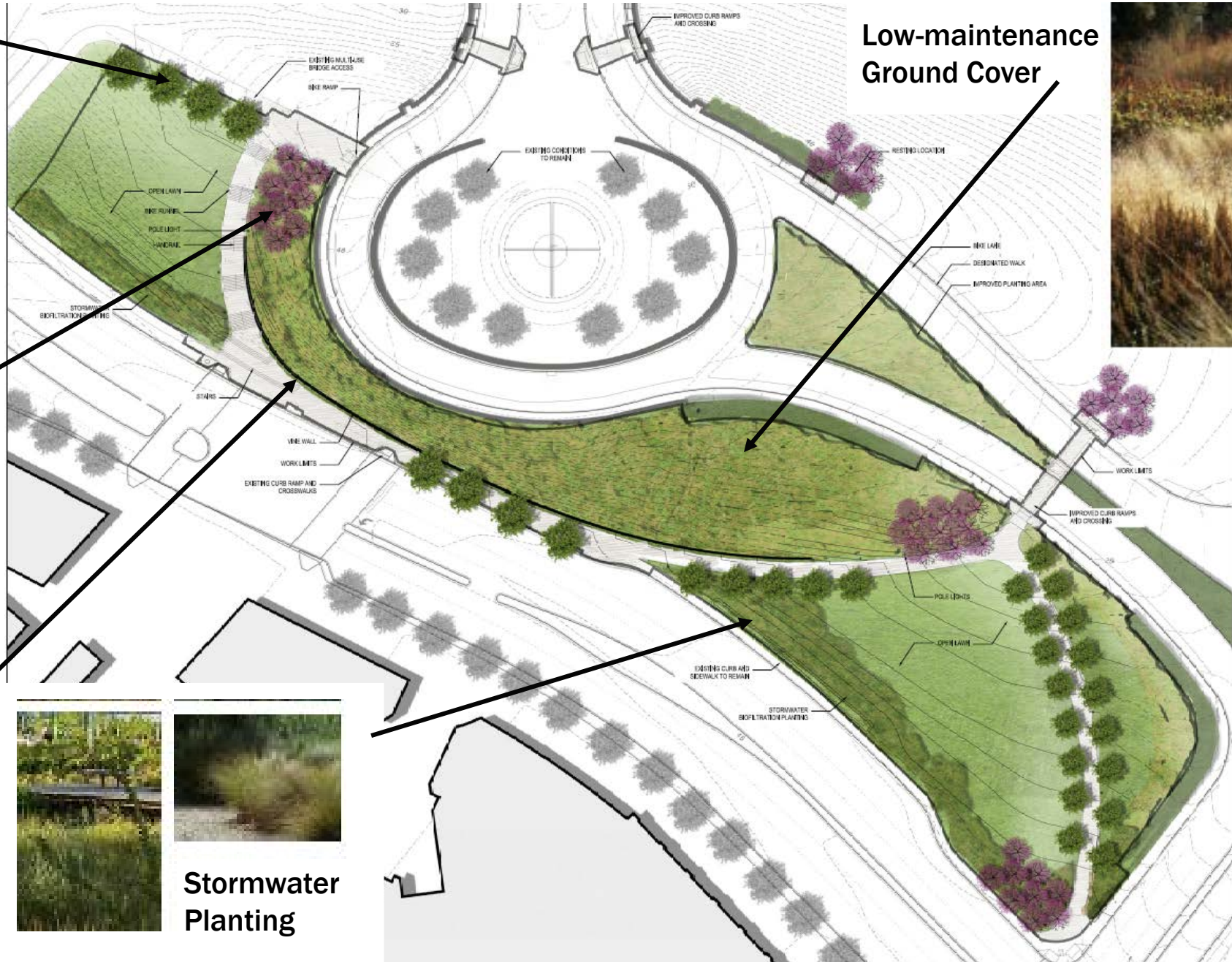
Shade Tree



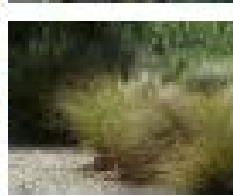
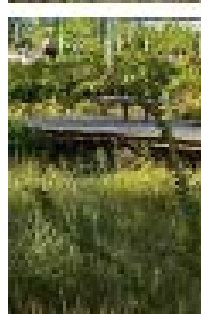
Ornamental Tree



Stormwater Planting



Low-maintenance Ground Cover



Stormwater Planting

Hand Rail



NPS
Aggregate



Retaining
Wall



Vine
Cable

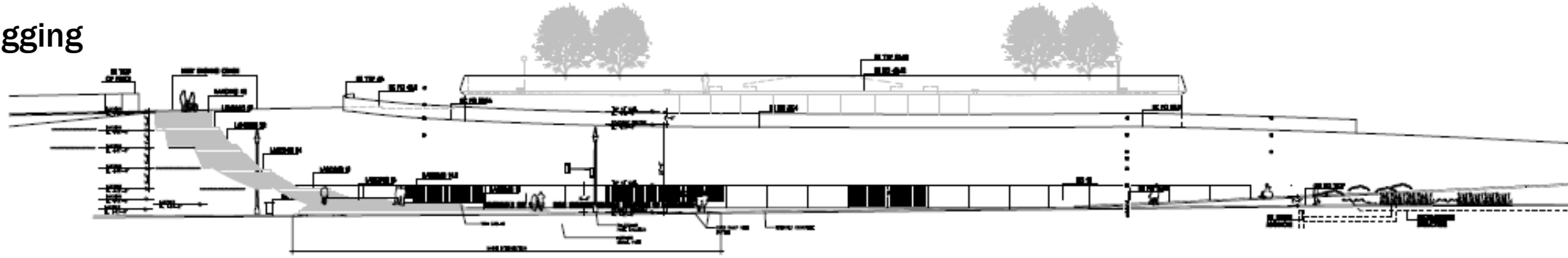


Pedestrian
Light



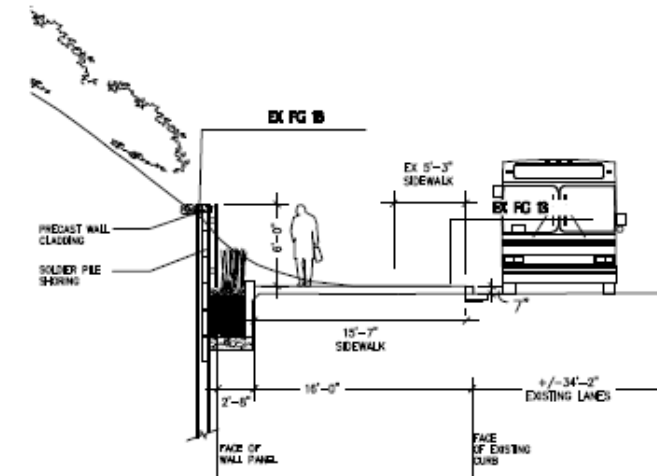
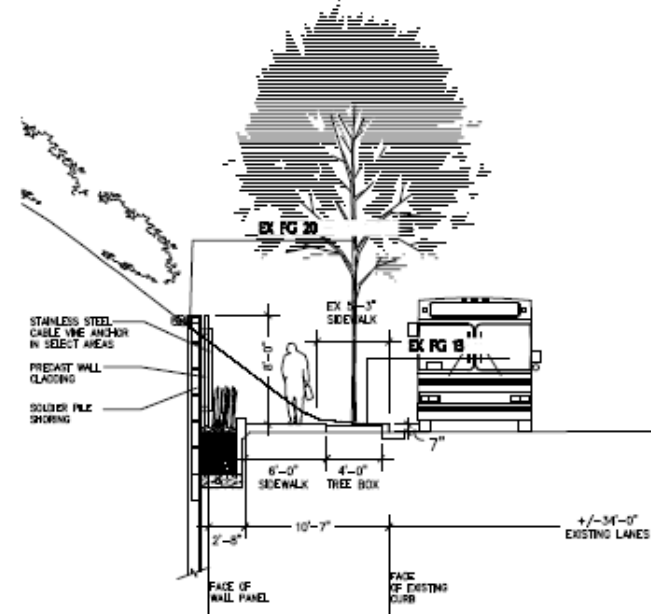
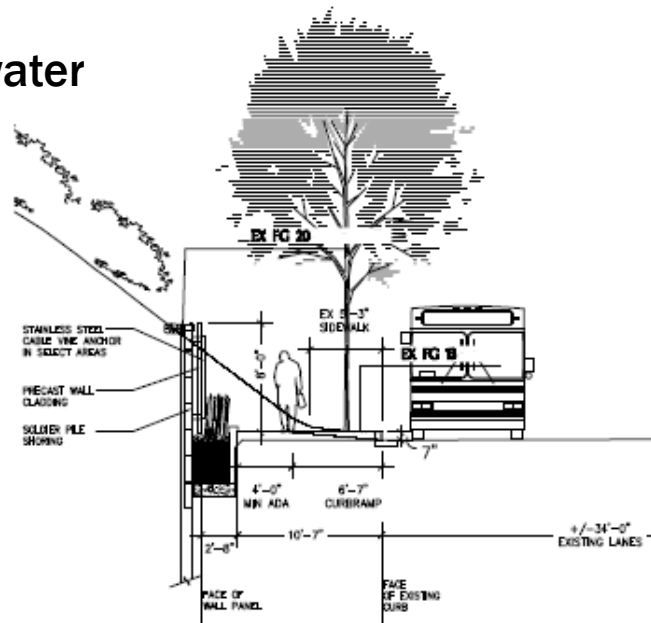
Elevation:

- Retaining wall with soldier pile & lagging



Sections:

- Integrated stormwater feature
- Vine wall





Slope Stabilization



Geo-cell reinforcement with soil and plants



Netting with planting



Pre-grown planting mats



Woody planting



Bike runnel at stairs

Street plantings