



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: April 5, 2018

PROJECT

South Capitol Street Corridor and Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

Southwest and Southeast Quadrants of the District of Columbia from I-295 Suitland Parkway Interchange to P Street Washington, DC

SUBMITTED BY

District of Columbia Department of Transportation

REVIEW AUTHORITY

District Projects Outside the Central Area per 40 USC § 8722(b)(1)

NCPC FILE NUMBER

7529

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER

75.00.01(38.00)44722

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

Approval of comments on concept design for the South Capitol Street Corridor and approval of preliminary and final design for the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

PROPOSED ACTION

Approve comments on concept design for the South Capitol Street Corridor and approve preliminary and final design for the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

ACTION ITEM TYPE

Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has submitted a \$441 million, multi-phased project to revitalize the South Capitol Street Corridor, replace the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, rehabilitate several parks along with the I-295 Interchange, and develop two new open spaces ("the ovals") that will serve as gateways on both sides of the bridge. This proposal will include the construction of a 1,445-foot-long, triple-arched, steel bridge with two v-piers in the water to replace the deteriorating Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

The new triple-arched Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge will include six travel lanes for vehicles, a dedicated bike path, a pedestrian path, and four overlooks. The east and west ovals will connect to esplanades on both sides of the Anacostia River via pedestrian and bicycle paths.

This has been an ongoing project for a number of years and DDOT has studied several design refinements for the bridge structure, the adjacent roadways, the east and west ovals, and access to the bridge and waterfront. The design of the bridge has evolved significantly since the Commission's concept review 2013. NCPC staff have been coordinating with DDOT, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DCSHPO) and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) on the design of the bridge and the ovals over the last several years. DDOT is seeking preliminary and final approval on the design of the bridge and comments from the Commission on the concept design of the park ovals and other improvements.

KEY INFORMATION

- The proposal includes the replacement of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, the rehabilitation of several parks along with the I-295 Interchange, the development of two new open spaces (“the ovals”) that will serve as gateways on both sides of the bridge, and the creation of esplanades that connect to the Anacostia River.
- These ovals will be part of the gateway sequence to the downtown, the U.S. Capitol and the neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia River for both foreign dignitaries arriving at Joint Base Andrews as well as District residents and visitors.
- There is significant local and federal interest in the project because of its location on axis with the U.S. Capitol and its connection to neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia River that are undergoing major transformations.
- Over the past 20 years, NCPC and the District government have developed several plans and studies, contemplating a new vision and uses for the South Capitol corridor. These plans include: Extending the Legacy; the Memorials and Museums Master Plan; the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative; and the South Capitol Street Land Use Study.
- The District of Columbia owns that land that comprises the east and west ovals. It is under the jurisdiction of DDOT.
- DDOT started the current design process for this project in 2014.
- In 2014, DDOT developed an Aesthetic Review Committee (ARC) that consisted of a representative from the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) and the National Capital Planning Commission to consult on the project during the request for proposal process.
- DDOT and the ARC jointly developed 15 overarching goals to guide the design and development of the project as a significant gateway into the city.
- NCPC reviewed the proposed bridge design as a concept in November 2013.
- CFA reviewed the bridge design most recently in November 2017 and in its letter to DDOT dated November 27, 2017 noted that the new bridge would create a distinctive and iconic image for this prominent crossing of the Anacostia River.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Notes that the District Department of Transportation is seeking preliminary and final approval of the Frederick Douglass Bridge design and comments on the South Capitol Street corridor concept design, including the two oval shaped parks, esplanade areas, and landscaping for the I-295 interchange with Suitland Parkway.

Notes that the South Capitol Street Corridor is one of the most symbolic gateways to the U.S. Capitol and is also home to one of the fastest growing, high-density neighborhoods in the District.

Notes that this proposal presents a significant opportunity to develop the oval-shaped parks on the east and west sides of the bridge into a sequence of gateways as proposed by NCPC in 2005, and connect both sides of the Anacostia River.

Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

Approves the preliminary and final site plans for a new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, which is 1,445 feet in length and includes three pairs of steel arches with a maximum height of 168 feet, six travel lanes, separated bicycle and pedestrian paths on both sides of the bridge, four overlooks, and two v-shaped piers.

Notes that the November 2013 Commission recommendation found that the proposed bridge design, which was a modest bridge design with slightly arched spans and supported by seven pairs of piers, was not an appropriate response given its importance as a gateway for the city and its setting.

Finds that the revised design with three pairs of large arches, up to 168 feet in height, and multimodal transportation elements is a strong, elegant design that distinguishes the bridge from the eleven other bridges in the District.

Notes that the proposed architectural lighting of the bridge combined with the existing lighting of the Nationals Park Stadium and new development in the South Capitol Street corridor could cumulatively impact views of the U.S. Capitol from Poplar Point and the topographic bowl.

Notes that the District Department of Transportation recognizes the potential impacts of bridge lighting on views to the U.S. Capitol and states it will develop an agreement to determine the operational parameters for the appropriate brightness, duration, use of special colors and other related lighting concerns for the bridge in an effort to minimize any adverse effects on views or the historic character of federal properties within the viewshed.

Requests that the District Department of Transportation include the Commission staff, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Park Service, and other relevant consulting parties as it develops the operational lighting agreement.

Notes that architectural and/or colored lighting on the South Capitol Street Bridge will add to existing and proposed lighting on other bridges in the District (Case, Key, and 11th Street Bridge Park).

Recommends the District Department of Transportation develop an overall lighting plan for all of the Potomac and Anacostia River bridges that analyzes the cumulative effects of bridge lighting on natural systems and larger views of the monumental core.

East Oval

Notes that for diplomats arriving at Joint Base Andrews and for District residents entering downtown, the east oval is the first opportunity in the sequence of park spaces that frame the bridge and mark the entrance of the South Capitol Street gateway to the U.S. Capitol.

Notes that from southbound on South Capitol Street, the east oval will serve as the gateway into Anacostia, one of the District's most historic neighborhoods.

Finds that given its passive setting located adjacent to Poplar Point and the wooded areas of Suitland Parkway, and it is outside of direct views to the U.S. Capitol, the east oval presents an opportunity for a more dramatic gateway element such as a national or local memorial, or public art, to distinguish the oval from nearby open space.

Requests that the future design consider how the east oval could better accommodate both visitors and residents by incorporating design elements such as a national memorial, local memorial or public art in a way that serves its dual role as a gateway to both the U.S. Capitol and the neighborhoods east of the river.

Notes that while pedestrian and bicycle access to this site from the west seems appropriate, the connections from the east, where the future Poplar Point redevelopment is located, needs to be strengthened.

Requests the District Department of Transportation explore a direct pedestrian/bicycle connection to the northeast from the oval, connecting to the proposed traffic island.

West Oval

Notes that while several NCPC plans and studies proposed a major memorial for the west oval - due to its axial relationship with the U.S. Capitol - the area surrounding the oval has substantially changed over the last decade into a more vibrant District entertainment area/neighborhood, which will require a memorial that is both compatible in program and design with surrounding uses and the intent to use this space as an urban park.

Supports the proposed concept to use the west oval as an active park/gathering space for residents and visitors with uses like a farmer's market, active recreation, children's play space, seating and a fountain.

Finds that given the size of the 3-acre oval, a gateway element such as a major memorial or public art installation can still be appropriate, however, unlike the east oval, the focal point of the west oval should continue to be the U.S. Capitol, which serves as the backdrop to this public space.

Requests that future designs consider how the west oval could accommodate gateway elements such as a memorial or public art, and show them at different scales.

Notes that there are two important axes that intersect and move through this site: a north axis with a view towards the U.S. Capitol and a northeast/southwest axis along Potomac Avenue, which is part of the L'Enfant Plan Street network.

Finds that the South Capitol Street axis is strengthened by the north-south orientation of the park and the landscape elements; however, the Potomac Avenue axis through the oval which is delineated with paving, is less successful because it does not fully align with the cartway.

Requests that the District Department of Transportation explore design concepts (including landscape, paving, and/or additional crosswalks) that better reconcile the change in the Potomac Avenue cartway width across the oval.

Overall Comments

Recommends the District Department of Transportation explore incorporating elements that describe the life and legacy of Frederick Douglass into the esplanade area or the ovals.

Requests a lighting plan for the ovals and esplanades in addition to the bridge that identifies the amount, placement and intensity of lighting.

Requests a signage plan that describes the number and placement of all signs for roadway navigation, pathway directions and interpretation.

Requests information regarding how the project will meet the District Department of Energy and the Environment requirements for stormwater management.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	November 2013 – Comments on concept design
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Approval of preliminary and final oval and landscape design (Summer 2018)

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

As one of the major axial lines extending from the U.S. Capitol, South Capitol Street is one of the most important viewsheds in the city. It connects to Suitland Parkway after crossing over the Anacostia River. Suitland Parkway was originally constructed in the mid-1940s to provide a connection between the newly opened Andrews Air Force Base located in Camp Springs, Maryland and Washington, DC. This parkway was soon converted to a southern link for the city with the construction of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, which opened in 1950. Today South Capitol Street provides an important connection for visitors, residents and commuters. It also represents a foundational element in the recent and current revival occurring along the Anacostia River Waterfront, serving both as an anchor to the southern end of South Capitol Street and as a gateway for rapidly changing areas on both sides of the river. Staff notes that the South Capitol Street Corridor is one of the most symbolic gateways to the U.S. Capitol and is also home to one of the fastest growing high-density neighborhoods in the District. In addition, staff notes that this proposal presents a significant opportunity to develop the oval-shaped parks on the east and west sides of the bridge into a sequence of gateways as proposed by NCPC in 2005, and connect both sides of the Anacostia River.

The project before the Commission can be separated into distinct parts: the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and the South Capitol Street Corridor. The corridor includes a number of sub elements including two ovals, esplanades, and the I-295/Suitland Parkway interchange. Staff notes that the District Department of Transportation is seeking preliminary and final approval of the Frederick Douglass Bridge design and comments on the South Capitol Street corridor concept design, including the two oval shaped parks, esplanade areas, and landscaping for the I-295 interchange with Suitland Parkway.

Analysis

The District Department of Transportation submission is comprised of several components that include the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, two traffic ovals owned by the District on both sides of the bridge, and landscape improvements from the east oval south to the I-295/Suitland Parkway interchange. In order to address the relevant issues, this analysis separates comments on these components and provides recommendations on them individually.

Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge

The Commission last reviewed this project in November 2013 at a concept level and it supported the location and alignment of the ovals. However, the Commission also agreed with the Commission of Fine Arts comments on the concept design that the applicant should revisit the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge design as both agencies noted that the proposed bridge design, which was a modest bridge design with slightly arched spans and supported by seven pairs

of piers, was not an appropriate response given its importance as a gateway for the city and its setting.

Following this concept review in 2013, DDOT continued working on the project and developed a Visual Quality Manual which introduced a framework for approaching the urban design, visual quality and aesthetic design of the project. This work influenced the amended Memorandum of Agreement under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which established an Aesthetic Review Committee to "...address visual effects of the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and to provide input on potential bridge design components."

DDOT also decided to develop overarching goals for the project, which included creating an elegant and iconic bridge. DDOT embarked on a competitive design process to develop alternatives for the new bridge that met these new goals. This led to the current bridge design that staff believes is a significant improvement over the previous design from 2013. After reviewing the submitted materials, staff **finds that the revised design with three pairs of large arches, up to 168 feet in height, and multimodal transportation elements is a strong, elegant design that distinguishes the bridge from the eleven other bridges in the District.** Staff also notes that the applicant has provided sufficient information to understand the bridge design regarding the proposed materials, scale, orientation, and other details. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **approve the preliminary and final site plans for a new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, which is 1,445 feet in length and includes three pairs of steel arches with a maximum height of 168 feet, six travel lanes, separated bicycle and pedestrian paths on both sides of the bridge, four overlooks, and two v-shaped piers.**

While staff is pleased with the overall bridge design and location, DDOT states in their submission that the project also includes architectural lighting for the bridge, which has not been determined. As noted earlier, this bridge is in an important location in the city and prominent in views of the city from the Anacostia Hills to the west. The bridge is south of the U.S. Capitol and there may be impacts to nighttime views depending on the type and intensity of the bridge lighting. There are also several nearby federal properties including Anacostia Park, Frederick Douglass Home National Historic Site, the Washington Navy Yard, St. Elizabeths West Campus, and Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling. In addition, this area is currently undergoing a change with new construction happening around the Nationals Park Stadium and planned developments underway at Poplar Point and Barry Farms, which are nearby. These projects will increase lighting levels in an area that has not previously been significantly illuminated. Staff notes that the proposed architectural lighting of the bridge combined with the existing lighting of the Nationals Park Stadium and new development in the South Capitol Street corridor could cumulatively impact views of the U.S. Capitol from Poplar Point and the topographic bowl.

In order to address these concerns regarding lighting impacts, also staff **notes** that the District Department of Transportation recognizes the potential impacts of bridge lighting on views to the U.S. Capitol and states it will develop an agreement to determine the operational parameters for the appropriate brightness, duration, use of special colors and other related lighting concerns for the bridge in an effort to minimize any adverse effects on views or the historic character of federal properties within the viewshed. The architectural lighting issue is one that will need input from

other federal agencies including the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and the National Park Service because they each have some oversight over lands in Washington, DC or along the Anacostia River. Staff recommends that the Commission **request that the District Department of Transportation include the Commission staff, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Park Service, and other relevant consulting parties as it develops the operational lighting agreement.**

In addition, there is a broader question regarding the cumulative effects of lighting many of the bridges in the District. The Commission reviewed and approved colored lighting for the Case Memorial Bridge (NCPC File No.7677), which is located near the Wharf development in Southwest. Recently DDOT submitted a proposal to light the Francis Scott Key Memorial Bridge (NCPC File No. 7931), which connects Georgetown to Arlington. The existing Frederick Douglass Bridge, while never submitted for review to NCPC, also has blue architectural lighting. The new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge is also seeking to include lighting. Staff is concerned that there has not been a comprehensive approach to determining bridge lighting levels and colors for all of the bridges crossing the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, which could impact larger views of the city. This comprehensive approach should address the cumulative impacts of lighting on longer views, and add some parameters to address the lighting issues together. Staff notes that architectural and/or colored lighting on the South Capitol Street Bridge will add to existing and proposed lighting on other bridges in the District (Case, Key, and 11th Street Bridge Park). Therefore, staff **recommends the District Department of Transportation develop an overall lighting plan for all of the Potomac and Anacostia River bridges that analyzes the cumulative effects of bridge lighting on natural systems and larger views of the monumental core.**

East Oval

The proposed ovals, bridge, and esplanades create a gateway sequence for travelers, residents and visitors entering and departing the Monumental Core, while connecting neighborhoods on both sides of the Anacostia River. The land for both ovals is owned by the District. DDOT's early concept designs for the east and west oval are different - the eastern oval (east side of the river) is designed as a more passive space and the western oval includes more activity. Staff notes that for diplomats arriving at Joint Base Andrews and for District residents entering downtown, the east oval is the first opportunity in the sequence of park spaces that frame the bridge and mark the entrance of the South Capitol Street gateway to the U.S. Capitol. In addition, staff notes from southbound on South Capitol Street, the east oval will serve as the gateway into Anacostia, one of the District's most historic neighborhoods.

Staff understands that compared to the west oval, the eastern oval is surrounded by more open space as it borders Poplar Point/Anacostia Park owned by NPS and low-density development at Joint Base Anacostia Bolling. As such, it is unlikely that the setting of the east oval will be as urban as the west oval in the future despite new economic development in Anacostia. The openness of the eastern oval could provide an opportunity to develop a larger-scale local memorial or public art to create a more dramatic gateway to the bridge and South Capitol Street corridor. In this location, it would not compete directly with views of the Capitol. It would also need to serve as a gateway to Anacostia and not become a traffic rotary. Staff **finds that given its passive setting**

located adjacent to Poplar Point and the wooded areas of Suitland Parkway, and it is outside of direct views to the U.S. Capitol, the east oval presents an opportunity for a more dramatic gateway element such as a national memorial, a local memorial or public art, to distinguish the oval from nearby open space.

The current concept design is largely comprised of pathways traversing the three-acre site. While staff supports the more passive nature of this design, there is also the opportunity to make the site feel more like a gateway than a thoroughfare. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission **request that the future design consider how the east oval could better accommodate both visitors and residents by incorporating design elements such as a national memorial, local memorial or public art in a way that serves its dual role as a gateway to both the U.S. Capitol and the neighborhoods east of the river.**

Regarding pedestrian and bicycle access, staff understands that there are proposed pathways connecting to three points from the oval, but the connection to the east is not sufficient. Staff notes that while pedestrian and bicycle access to this site from the west seems appropriate, the applicant needs to strengthen the connections from the east, where the future home of the Poplar Point redevelopment is located. Staff believes that this can be addressed by including a new crosswalk to the northeast, which would connect the oval with a proposed traffic island. Staff therefore **requests the District Department of Transportation explore a direct pedestrian/bicycle connection to the northeast from the oval, connecting to the proposed traffic island.**

West Oval

South Capitol Street is a major axis to the U.S. Capitol. Although it was included in the L'Enfant Plan, it did not cross the Anacostia River until the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge was constructed in the mid-20th century. South Capitol Street had been an underdeveloped part of Washington, DC for many decades, largely consisting of industrial uses. Over the past 20 years, NCPC and the District have developed several plans and studies, contemplating new uses and ideas for this area. These plans include: Extending the Legacy; the Memorials and Museums Master Plan; the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative; and the South Capitol Street Land Use Study. In summary, these plans have envisioned this corridor as a wide boulevard with an open space component and a major national memorial at the terminus of the Frederick Douglass Bridge. The earliest plan, Extending the Legacy, envisioned this terminus as a possible future home of the U.S. Supreme Court, which would have allowed for a separate home for this branch of government.

Since that time, investments in the city have increased significantly and this has translated into more development for all parts of the city. This reinvestment and development has meant that even areas around South Capitol Street have started to see greater density due to recent construction. Today, the South Capitol Street corridor is a vibrant entertainment area/neighborhood anchored by the Nationals Park Stadium. Construction of the DC United Stadium in nearby Buzzard Point will finish this summer. The evolution of this area into a thriving local entertainment area/neighborhood calls for a reevaluation of how the oval should be designed and programmed. Staff notes that while several NCPC plans and studies proposed a major memorial for the west

oval - due to its axial relationship with the U.S. Capitol - the area surrounding the oval has substantially changed over the last decade into a more vibrant District entertainment area/neighborhood, which will require a memorial that is both compatible in program and design with surrounding uses and the intent to use this space as an urban park.

Nonetheless, NCPC still envisions the oval as a gateway to the U.S. Capitol as clearly evidenced in newly adopted policies in the Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan. These policies reinforce the U.S. Capitol as the spatial center of the city and reclaim South Capitol Street as a grand boulevard that links the U.S. Capitol to the waterfront by addressing transportation infrastructure and enhancing public spaces.

DDOT's proposed concept design for the west oval is an active space with room for a farmers market, play areas and places to sit and play board games. The west oval is sited in an area that is quickly changing and includes significant development that will bring residents, visitors and others to this neighborhood. There is also recognition that the site could accommodate a major national or local memorial, and/or public art, however this should be balanced with the oval's potential use by the surrounding neighborhood as open space. DDOT should analyze the potential of this site through a study that demonstrates how it could accommodate memorials or public art elements at different scales – possibly include a monumental scale and a more modest scale. Staff notes that such gateway features, while important to the design of the space and its role as a gateway, should be sensitive to views of the U.S. Capitol – the focal point of this space. Staff **supports the proposed concept to use the west oval as an active park/gathering space for residents and visitors with uses like a farmer's market, active recreation, children's play space, seating and a fountain.** Staff also **finds that given the size of the three-acre oval, a gateway element such as a major memorial or public art installation can still be appropriate, however, unlike the east oval, the focal point of the west oval should continue to be the U.S. Capitol, which serves as the backdrop to this public space.** Staff therefore recommends that the Commission **request that future designs consider how the west oval could accommodate gateway elements such as a memorial or public art, and show them at different scales.**

The proposed concept design includes viewsheds and demarcation of the South Capitol Street and Potomac Avenue axes intersecting the site. South Capitol Street creates a significant north south axial orientation for the west oval while Potomac Avenue creates a diagonal axis through the site. The amended Memorandum of Agreement developed for Section 106 stated that the South Capitol Street Corridor project will "...visually maintain the original layout of South Capitol Street and Potomac Avenue and preserve open space for future development in accordance with NCPC planning and policy documents." Staff understands that while the South Capitol Street axis is strengthened by the north-south orientation of the park and the proposed landscaping, the Potomac Avenue viewshed and crossing through the site is less successful because it does not coincide with the actual cartway. Therefore, staff notes that there are two important axes that intersect and move through this site: a north axis with a view towards the U.S. Capitol and a northeast/southwest axis along Potomac Avenue, which is part of the L'Enfant Plan Street network. Staff recommends that the Commission **find that the South Capitol Street axis is strengthened by the north-south orientation of the park and the landscape elements; however, the Potomac Avenue axis through the oval marked with paving, is less successful because it does not fully align with**

the cartway. Staff also recommends that the Commission **request that the District Department of Transportation explore design concepts (including landscape, paving, and/or additional crosswalks) that better reconcile the change in the Potomac Avenue cartway width across the oval.**

Additional Lighting, Signage, and Stormwater Management

The ovals, landscaping and esplanade components of the project are still in the concept design phase. For preliminary review staff is requesting additional information on lighting, signage and stormwater management. Therefore, staff suggests that the Commission:

Recommends the District Department of Transportation explore incorporating elements that describe the life and legacy of Frederick Douglass into the esplanade area or the ovals.

Requests a lighting plan for the ovals and esplanades in addition to the bridge, that that identifies the amount, placement and intensity of lighting.

Requests a signage plan that describes the number and placement of all signs for roadway navigation, pathway directions and interpretation.

Requests information regarding how the project will meet the District Department of Energy and the Environment requirements for stormwater management.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

This project is in conformance with the policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital; including the Preservation and Historic Features Element policies that encourage: the protection of important views and vistas; creating transportation infrastructure that is consistent with the pedestrian character of the L'Enfant City and developing the monumental core in accordance with the principles of the Extending the Legacy Plan and the Memorials and Museums Master Plan.

Memorials and Museums Master Plan

NCPC's *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* (2001) built on the 1997 *Extending the Legacy Plan* by defining a long-range plan for new museums, memorials, and other public buildings, strategically distributed to all quadrants of the city. The 2001 master plan identified 100 potential sites for future memorials and museums, including the South Capitol Street terminus at the Anacostia River, the Southeast-Southwest (SE-SW) Freeway, and the south shore of the Anacostia River in Anacostia Park, SE as prime sites. In the plan, prime sites were defined as those of the highest order. Because of high visibility and strong axial relationships with the U.S. Capitol and the White House, the plan proposed that these sites be reserved for subjects of lasting historical and national importance.

The location of this site, Site 8, is identified in the Memorials and Museums Master Plan as being on private property south of where the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge connects to South Capitol Street. South Capitol Street is depicted in the plan as a grand boulevard with grass panels and landscaping, reminiscent of the National Mall. The DDOT proposal general meets or supports the intent of this plan, but the scope of the DDOT project does not include some it. A major memorial is not included in this proposal as it is not in the project scope, however the DDOT design does not precluded one from being developed in the future.

Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan

In 2003, the *Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan* (AWI) was published. This District of Columbia lead initiative was created to outline "...a powerful vision for the future of the Anacostia waterfront." It had five major goals that established a framework for the future development of this long neglected area of the city. NCPC, along with other federal agencies, signed onto this forward-looking plan and have been supported its goals of creating a vibrant waterfront area.

The South Capitol Street Corridor was identified as a key planning area that the plan noted was a "...significant gateway to the Capitol." The plan also described the vision for this corridor as a "great boulevard that includes retail activities and cultural destinations, and provides a gracious civic environment for pedestrians and bicyclists." This description is very similar to the one from

the Memorials and Museums Master Plan. In addition to this, the AWI went further and described the many areas along the Anacostia River including making South Capitol Street into a "...reconfigured corridor [that] will facility access to - and connection between - Buzzard Point, Poplar Point, the near Southeast, Southwest, and Historic Anacostia neighborhoods." The AWI had a larger scope and was more detailed than the previous planning efforts had been. It also developed several concepts for reconfiguring the South Capitol Street Corridor, shown in Figure 13, that included according to the plan reconfiguring "...the existing highway ramps for better access to development areas and to introduce impressive civic architecture, forming a worthy gateway to the Capitol."

This DDOT proposal to reconstruct South Capitol Street Corridor generally fulfills this vision. The proposed design accomplishes this by including bicycle and pedestrian amenities, creating a grand boulevard, re-aligning the roadway and including several large open spaces. This DDOT project is being constructed g development will occur and because of this there is a disconnection between the current proposal meeting the during a time of transition for this part of the city. The grand vision for this important corridor is beginning to synchronize up with the development happening around it.

National Historic Preservation Act

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act was executed for the project in July 2011. Since then, the bridge alignment has been changed and is now parallel to the existing bridge and incorporates two ovals on either side of the bridge. Due to these changes, the initial MOA needed to be amended. DDOT reopened consultation pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and after addressing the changes to the design again concluded the consultation process with the execution of an amended MOA in June 15, 2015.

National Environmental Policy Act

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the project was published in March of 2011. While the FEIS was completed, the Record of Decision has not been signed by the Federal Highway Agency. Since that time, revisions to the project design have occurred and have warranted an additional environmental review. With this new proposal, some of the environmental and right-of-way impacts have been eliminated or reduced.

In July 2013, FHWA and DDOT initiated a Supplemental EIS process to evaluate the environmental benefits and impacts of the revised design of the project. The Final Supplemental EIS was completed in 2015 and the Record of Decision was signed on August 13, 2015.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its March 14, 2018 meeting. Without objection, the Committee forwarded the proposed comments on concept design to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. DOEE noted that they are reviewing the proposal for stormwater compliance, and that the new road sections of the project must meet the current 1.7" stormwater standard. DCOP noted that the Buzzard Point vision framework includes design recommendations for the west oval. The SHPO is coordinating subject to an existing Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement. The participating agencies were: NCPC, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office; the District Department of Transportation, the District Department of Energy and the Environment, the National Park Service; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed an initial concept design for the South Capitol Street Reconstruction project at its September 19, 2013 meeting. At that time, the Commission raised a concern about the bridge design, as it did not believe that it was an appropriate response given its importance and setting. The Commission did not vote, but deferred action on the project requested the design be re-evaluated and to resubmit a concept design in the future. Following this 2013 meeting and similar comments from NCPC and the DCSHPO, DDOT determined that it would need to undergo a design process and has now developed another concept design for the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. The Commission reviewed the revised concept in November 2017 and in its letter dated November 22, 2017, it "...endorsed the concept of a bridge deck suspended from three pairs of arches, which they said would create a distinctive and iconic image for this prominent crossing of the Anacostia River. Noting the potential for the bridge to be more elegant, they encouraged the design team to refine the proportions of the arches..." and "...they suggested that developing these proportions, as well as the details and connections at the railings and points of support, could elevate a promising concept into an exceptional design."

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Carlton Hart
03/29/2018

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

NCPC File #: 7529

South Capitol Street Corridor and Frederick Douglass Bridge

Southeast
Washington, DC

District Department of Transportation

Concept Design

Commission meeting date: April 5, 2018

NCPC review authority: District project (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1))

Applicant request: Approval of preliminary and final site development plans

Delegated / consent / open / executive session: Open

NCPC Review Officer: Hart

NCPC File number: 7529

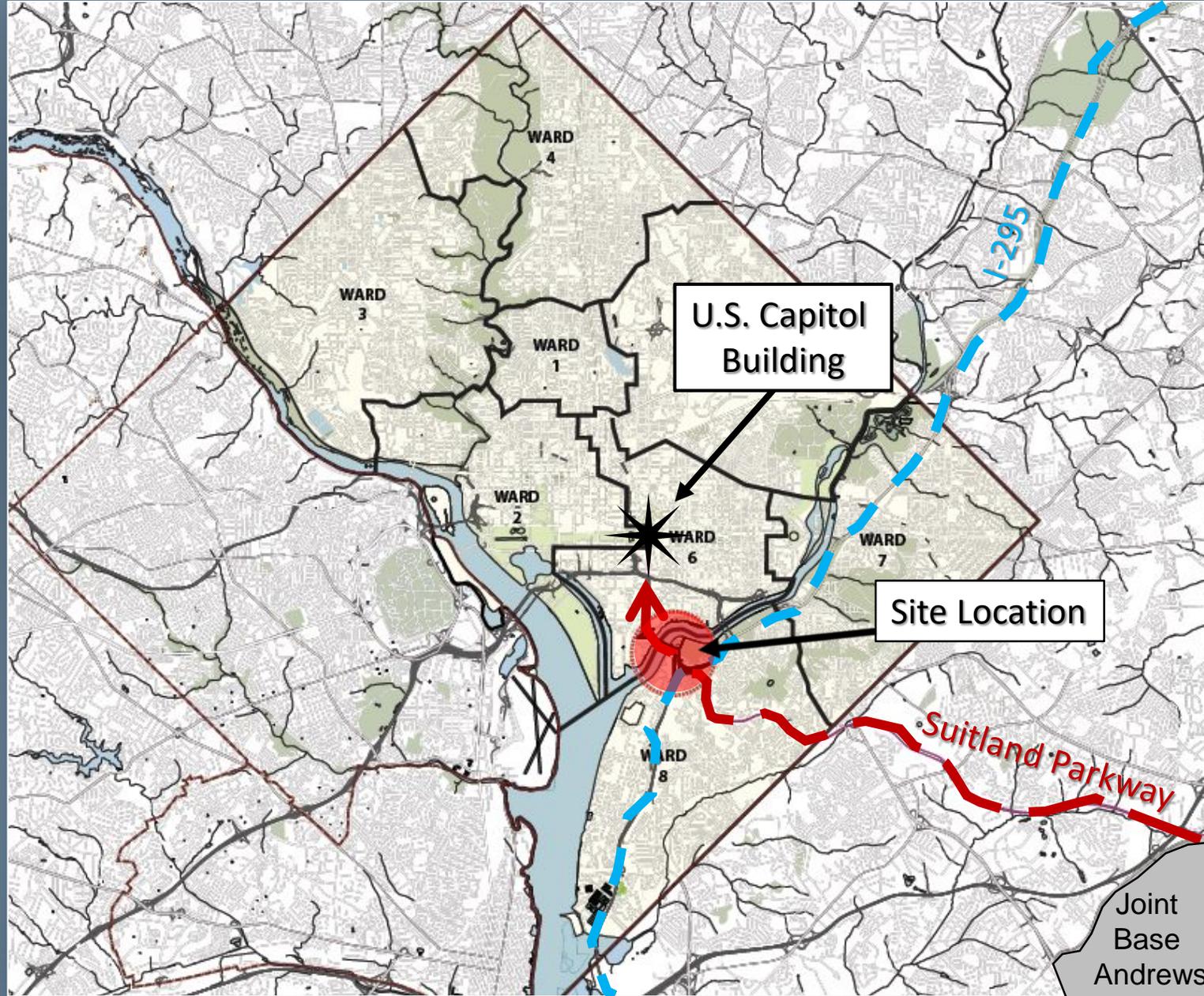
Project summary:

This proposal is a \$600 million, multi-phased project to revitalize the South Capitol Street Corridor and replace the Frederick Douglass Bridge and includes the rehabilitation of several triangular parks and two new open spaces. This proposal will include the construction of a 1,600 foot long, triple arched bridge with two v-piers in the water to replace the deteriorating Frederick Douglass Bridge.

This has been an ongoing project for a number of years and DDOT has studied several design refinements including redesign of the concept bridge. DDOT evaluated the designs to reduce or eliminate the right-of-way and environmental impacts of the project while improving access to the bridge, and connecting roads including maintaining South Capitol Street as a main gateway into the District.

This concept proposal was a modification to the 2011 FEIS Preferred Alternative and since the alignment of the new Frederick Douglass Bridge will parallel the existing bridge, DDOT developed a Supplemental EIS which was completed within the last year.

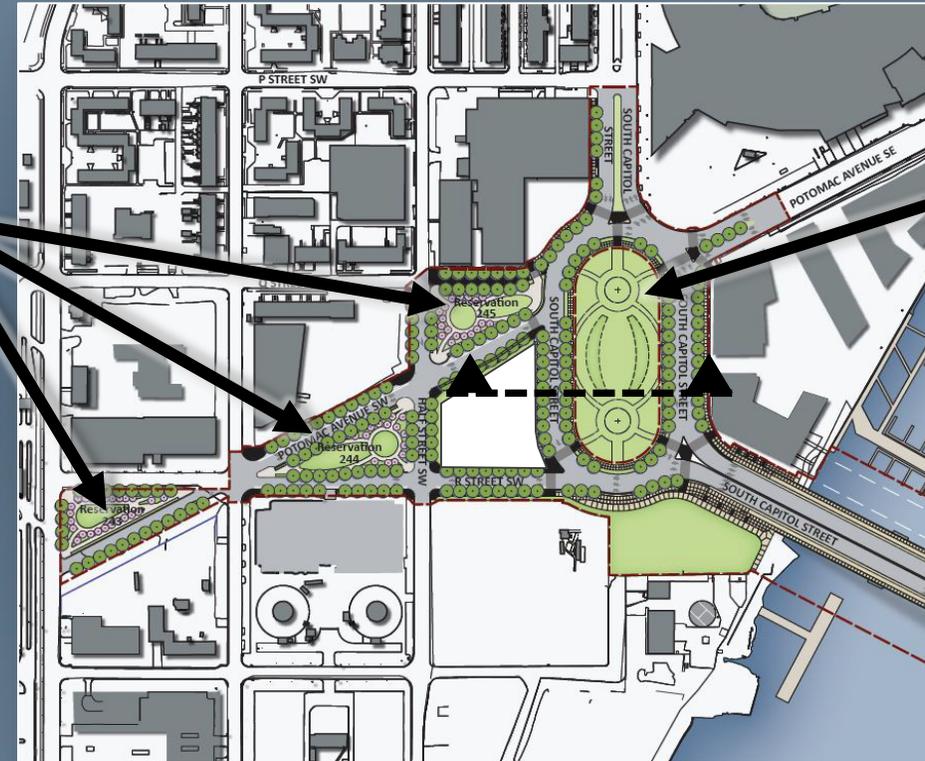
NCPC staff have been coordinating with DDOT, DCSHPO and CFA on the design of the bridge and the ovals on either side of the bridge.







Triangle Parks



West Oval
(3.1 acres)

Other

- Connections to Riverwalk Trail
- Bike facilities
- Potomac Avenue reconstruction

A 1.3.2 West Oval Sections

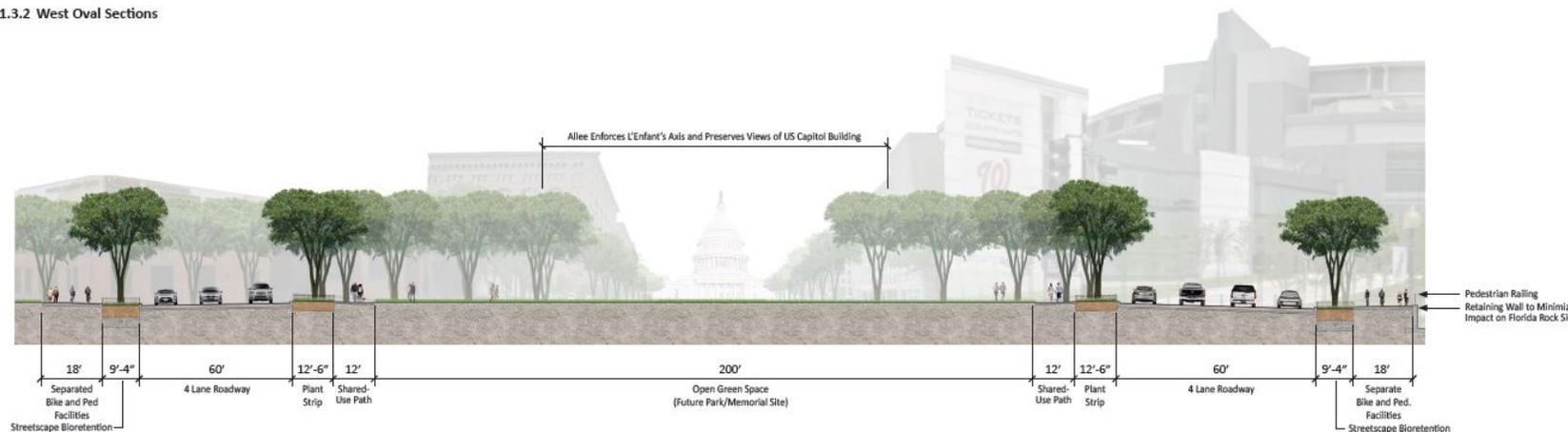
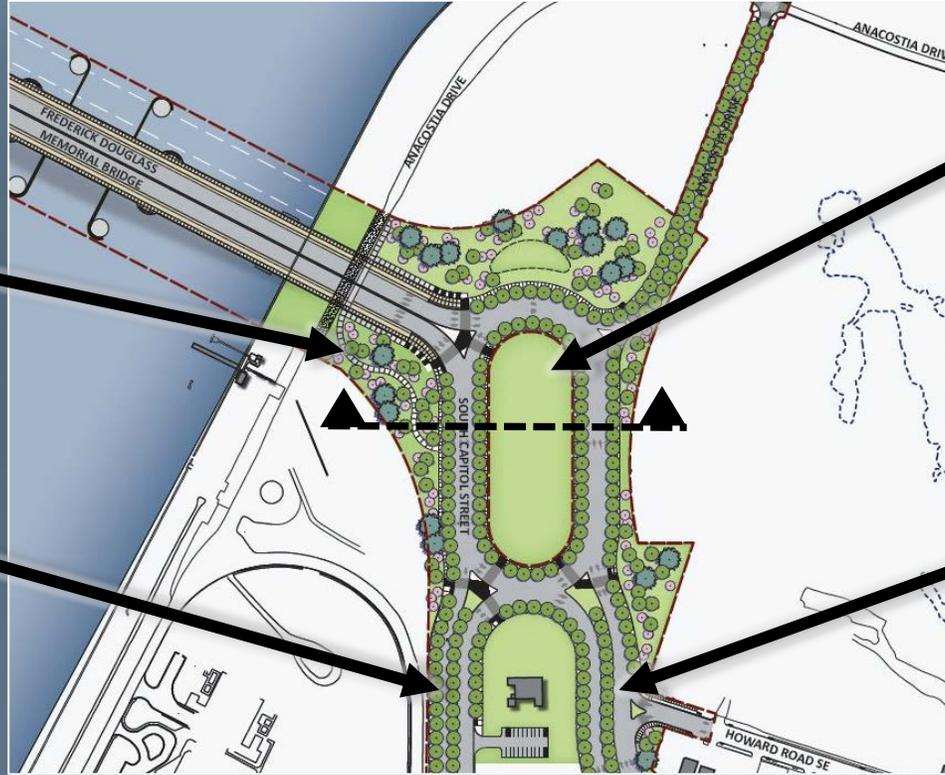


Figure A 1-14 Section E - West Oval - West to East
Scale: 1" = 30'

Connections to Riverwalk Trail

South Capitol Street



East Oval
(2.9 acres)

Suitland Parkway

A 1.3.4 East Oval Sections

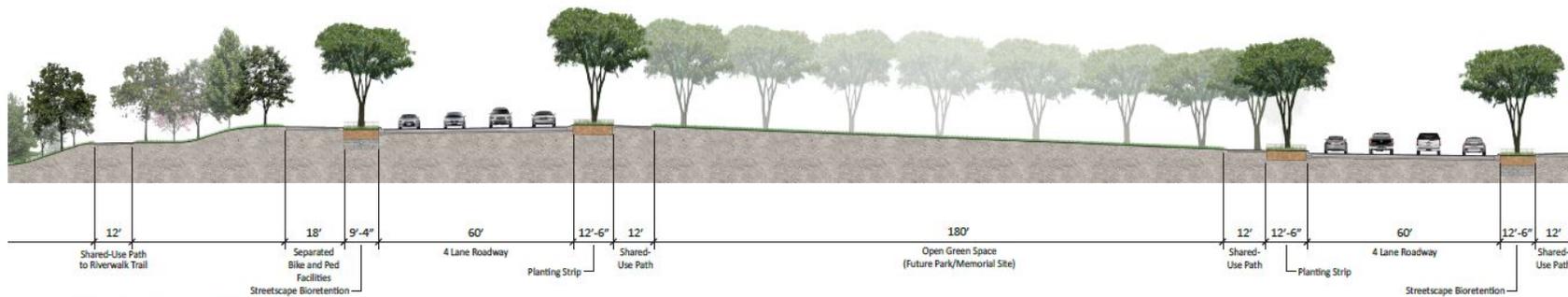
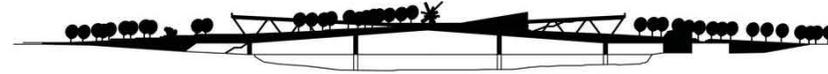


Figure A 1-21 Section A - East Oval - West to East
Scale: 1" = 30'

Frederick Douglass Bridge

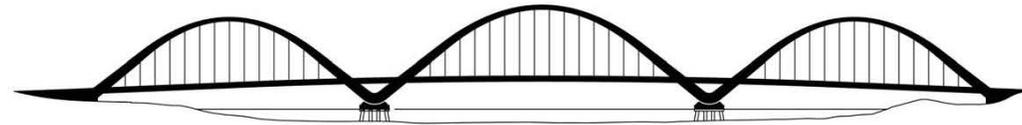
11th Street Bridge
Proposed



Taft Memorial Bridge
1907



Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge
Proposed



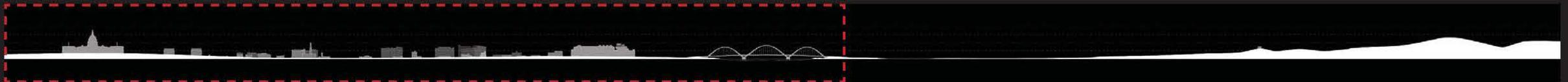
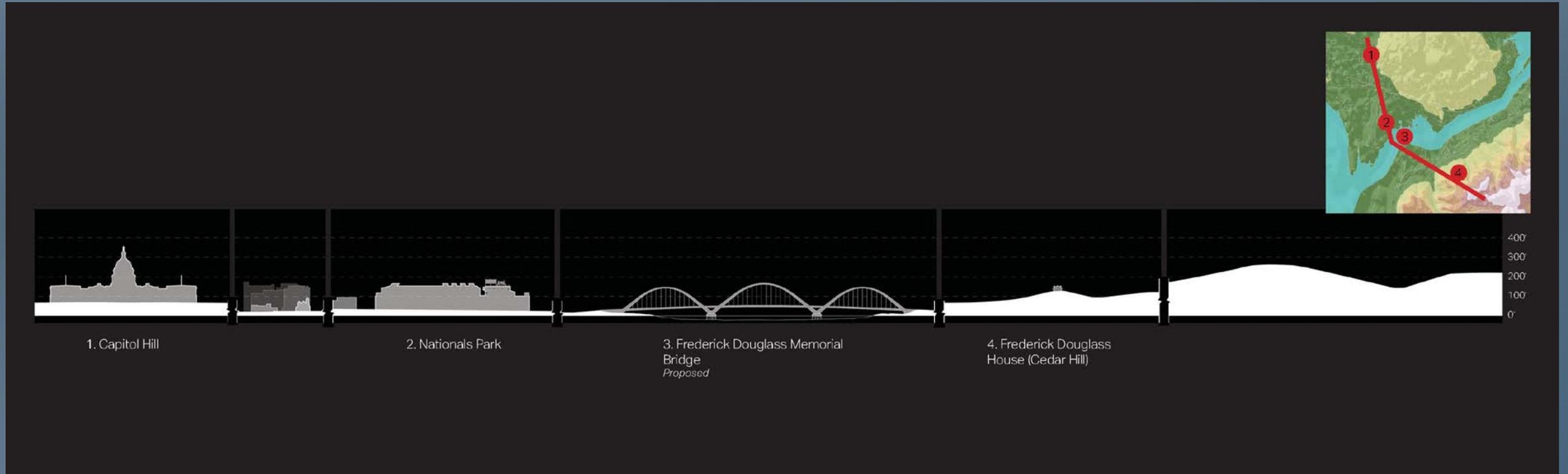
Francis Scott Key Memorial Bridge
1923



Arlington Memorial Bridge
1932



The multiple arch structure of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge design is reflective of the existing arch bridge typology of DC. Compared to existing DC bridges, the two v-pier design of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge will provide river users and waterfront visitors with greater unobstructed views under the bridge deck.



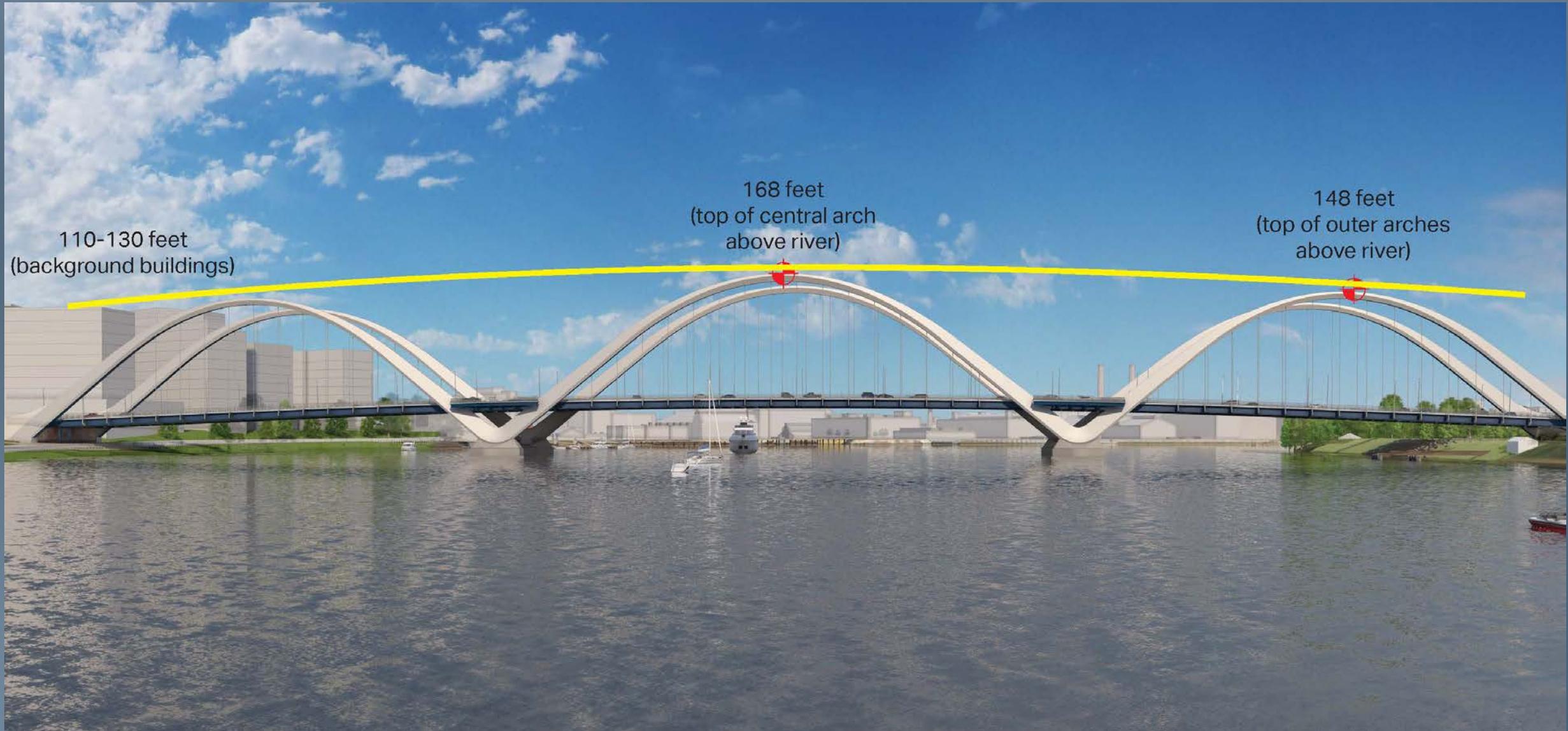
1. Transform South Capitol Street into grand urban boulevard and gateway to the District's Monumental Core.
2. Create an elegant and iconic new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge that reflects the classical sentiment of Washington's monumental bridges and is grounded in the traditions of great civic design in the District.
3. Enhance the Project Area by emphasizing:
 - a) Historic views along primary and crucial street corridors, such as the South Capitol Street view shed.
 - b) Views of the new bridge from various locations around the project site, especially from the existing and future riverfront parks and esplanades.
 - c) Views along and across the Anacostia River to accentuate broad urban vistas.
 - d) New views of the District and surrounding public spaces for users of the South Capitol Street bridge.
4. Respect and celebrate the cultural and architectural history of the District.
5. Design project elements to complement contextual urban elements and properties determined to have historic significance.
6. Harmonize the proposed scale and height of the new bridge with the long-term projected growth of surrounding neighborhoods.
7. Showcase the Anacostia River as a valuable natural resource by providing enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access to waterfront areas on both shorelines.
8. Connect adjacent neighborhoods by improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and better managing motor vehicle traffic throughout the corridor.
9. Integrate a network of open spaces that provide high quality, people-oriented urban parks and destinations.
10. Use materials that are timeless in their appearance, exceptionally durable, and inspired by the great civic architecture of the District.
11. Pursue state-of-the-art landscape design that attracts and supports intensive pedestrian activity, while integrating sustainable management and restoration strategies
12. Interpret the cultural legacy of Frederick Douglass into the design of the bridge and streetscape.
13. Design all aspects of the Project to encourage subsequent public and private investments that further expand the public realm.
14. Anticipate future nationally-significant commemorative works in, and adjacent to, the Project Area.
15. Establish an interim use program and design for the traffic ovals at each end of the bridge to complement the adjacent land uses, and reinforce the views to and from the L'Enfant Plan.





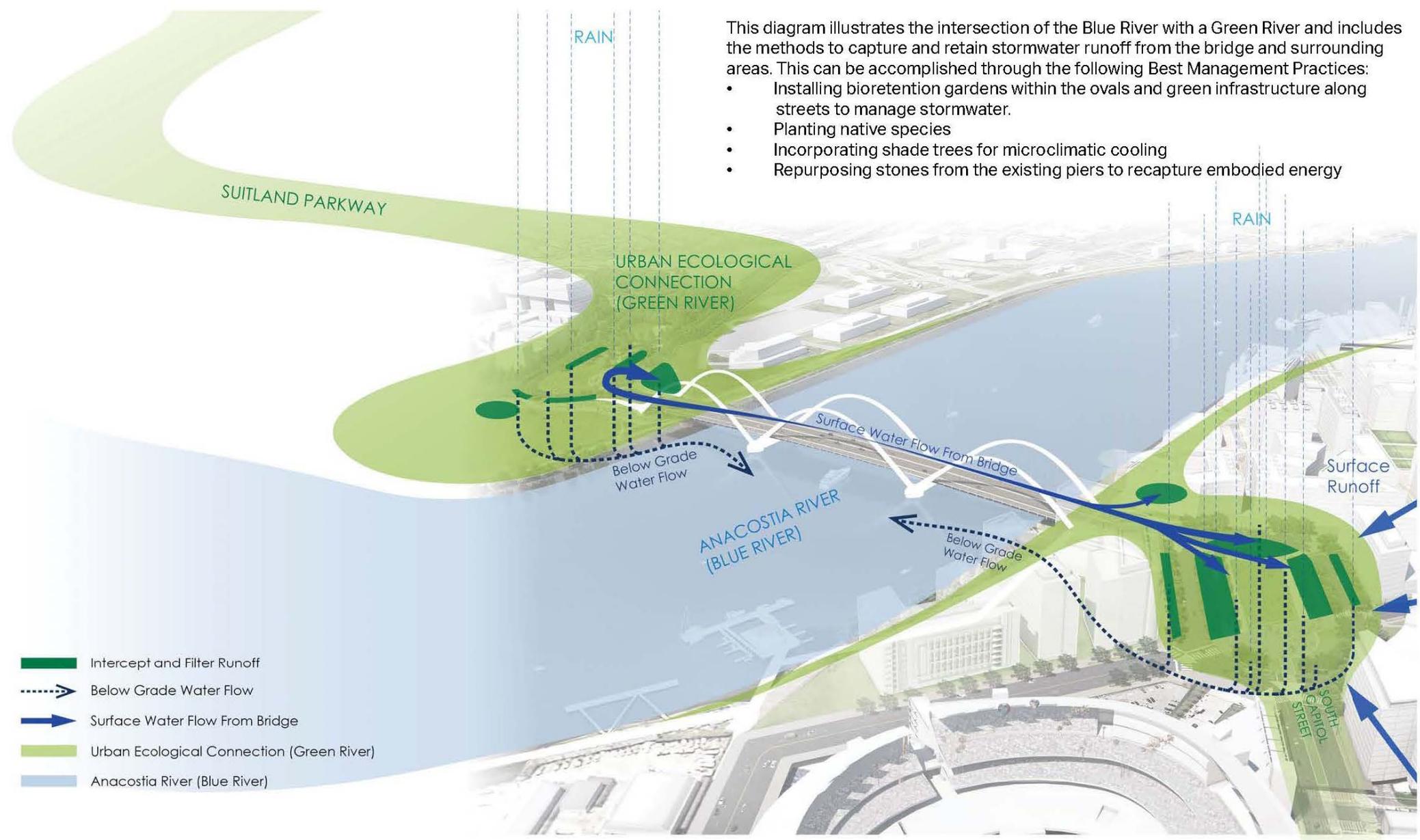
This aerial perspective looking west shows the curvilinear terraces and expansive open spaces on Poplar Point in the foreground, and the future development context of Buzzard Point in the background.

The multiple arch bridge will mark a symbolic passage across the Anacostia River, acting as a singular and iconic gateway into the Nation's Capital. Inviting traffic ovals bookend the signature bridge and complete the sense of traveling along a grand urban boulevard. The ovals are interconnected with their surroundings through urban open spaces and walkways.









This diagram illustrates the intersection of the Blue River with a Green River and includes the methods to capture and retain stormwater runoff from the bridge and surrounding areas. This can be accomplished through the following Best Management Practices:

- Installing bioretention gardens within the ovals and green infrastructure along streets to manage stormwater.
- Planting native species
- Incorporating shade trees for microclimatic cooling
- Repurposing stones from the existing piers to recapture embodied energy

- Intercept and Filter Runoff
- > Below Grade Water Flow
- ➡ Surface Water Flow From Bridge
- Urban Ecological Connection (Green River)
- Anacostia River (Blue River)

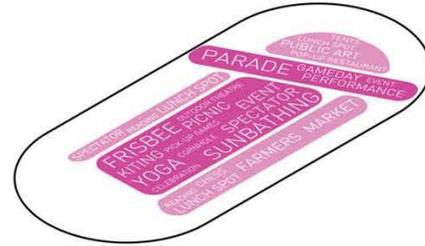


The West Oval

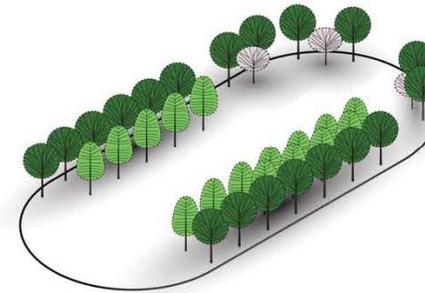
The West Oval is intended as a formal urban park intended for active and passive recreation and to accentuate the direct symbolic views of the U.S. Capitol. The West Oval is also designed to be complementary with the new Buzzard Point development, which will provide residential, commercial and institutional uses. The oval will be framed by development generating heightened pedestrian activity. New buildings will frame the bridge and the approach to the river.

The West Oval provides pedestrian circulation in all directions within the oval. The pathways connect the oval with the surrounding community through five crosswalks.

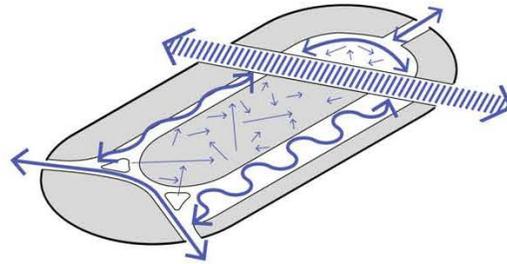
An open lawn located in the center of the West Oval provides direct views to the U.S. Capitol. Trees surrounding the center lawn and pathways provide canopy cover and reinforce the South Capitol Street axis. Bioretention areas within the West Oval receive stormwater from the oval and surrounding streets.



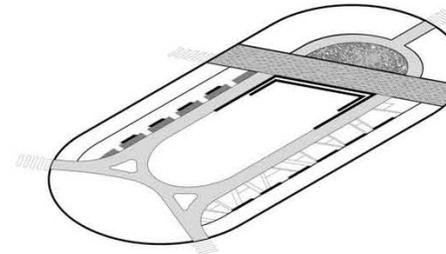
- Program**
- Passive
 - Active



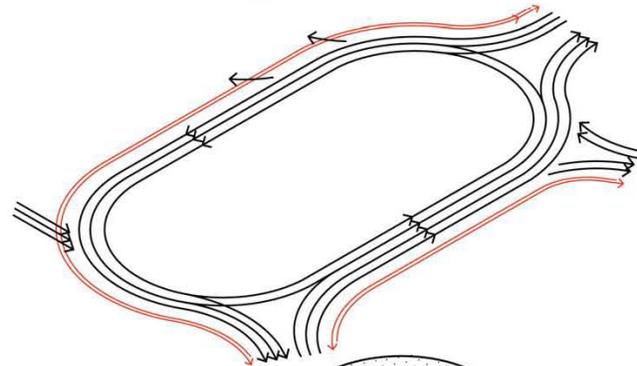
- Trees**
- Flowering
 - Medium Canopy
 - Canopy



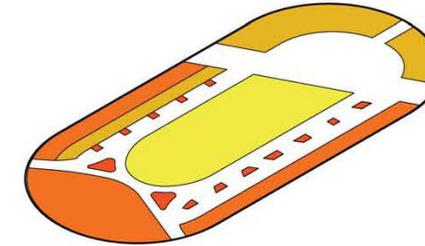
- Pedestrian Circulation**
- Primary
 - Secondary
 - Tertiary



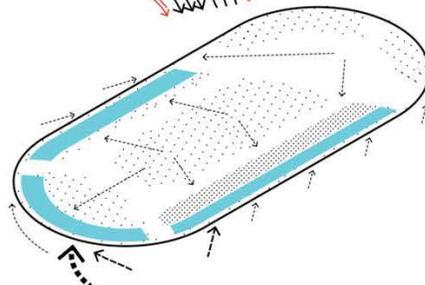
- Hardscape**
- Bench
 - Stone Paver 1
 - Stone Paver 2
 - Concrete



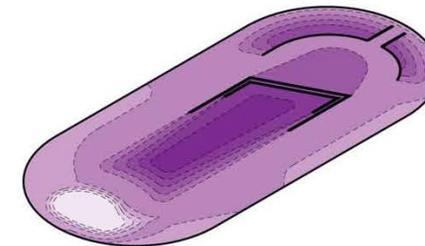
- Vehicular Circulation**
- Vehicular
 - Bicycle



- Ground Plane Planting**
- Lawn
 - Feature
 - Bioretention



- Stormwater**
- Bioretention
 - Pervious Paving (Gravel)
 - Pervious
 - Water Conveyance



- Topography**
- 29'-0"
 - 22'-0"





The West Oval Esplanade

Consistent with the plans for the future Buzzard Point neighborhood, the Anacostia RiverWalk trail will be expanded under the western end of the bridge to provide a lively plaza. The West Esplanade is envisioned as an active and vibrant public space with distinctive features and program serving the adjoining urban neighborhood as well as that of the surrounding area.

Gently sloped pathways and stairs will guide pedestrians and bicyclists to the broad esplanade of the Anacostia RiverWalk trail. Because the land rises to meet the base of the new development, the West Esplanade will allow for direct visual and physical contact with the water's edge. The West Esplanade will be a waterfront amenity, offering people direct access to the Anacostia River, affording unique views of the bridge, and providing shade in which to gather.



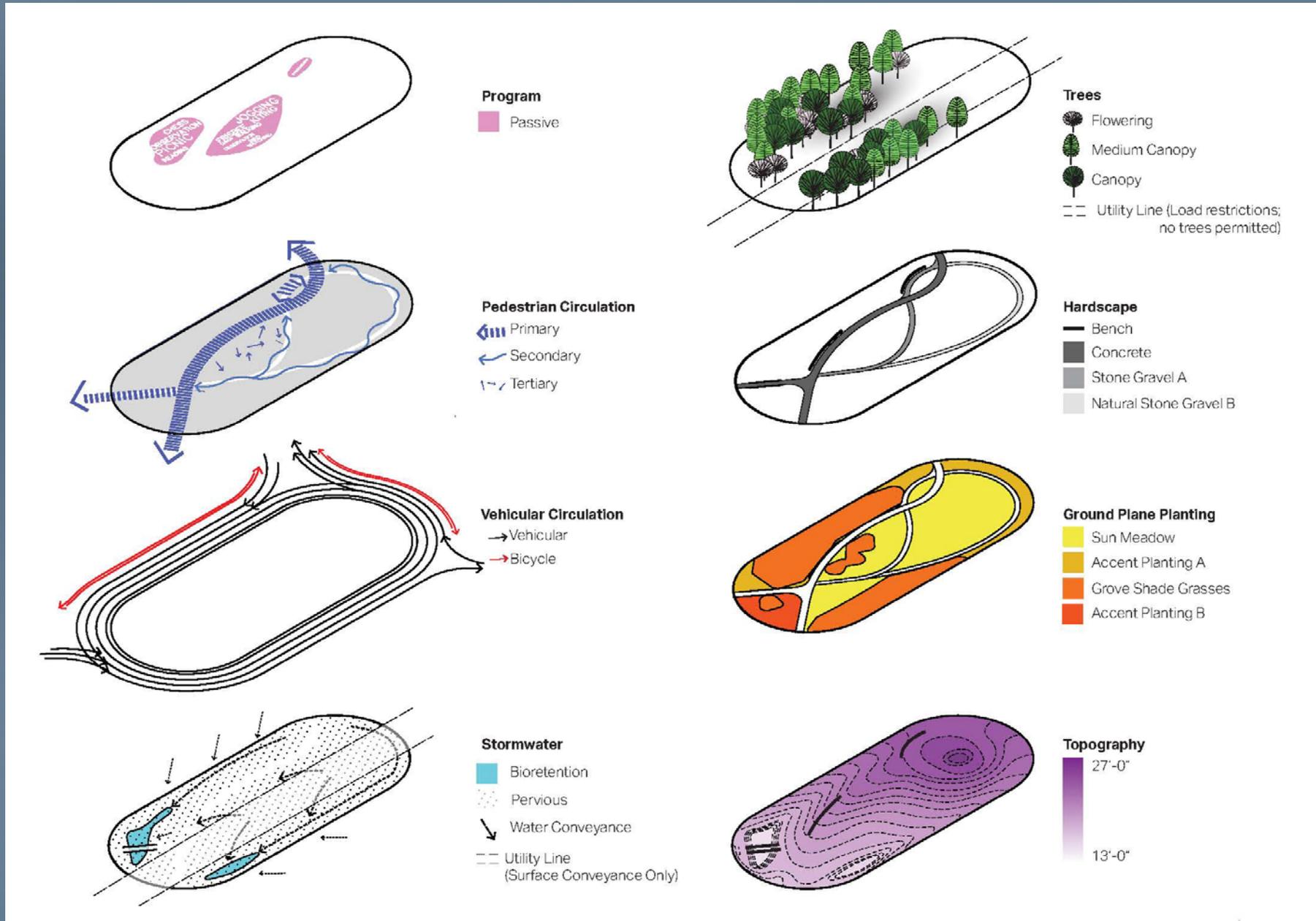
Community Movable Playground





The East Oval

The East Oval is envisioned as a more natural meadow to provide a distinctive transition from the river-edge lawn to the nearby woods of Suitland Parkway within the future context of Poplar Point. The East Oval is designed as a more informal and natural landscape that offers an accessible natural area for Anacostia, where much of the existing open space is fenced off from use. As Poplar Point develops, the oval will continue to provide motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists with wide vistas of the river and the city skyline to the north.





The East Oval Esplanade

The East Esplanade will be located under and adjacent to the bridge and the surrounding Poplar Point area. Staircases are provided near each arch touchdown to directly connect pedestrians with the riverfront East Esplanade. Given the wide and steeper configuration at Poplar Point, the stairs are perpendicular to the curving terraces to accommodate the change in grade. The stairs and pathways extend to the top of a levee in the form of a walkway suitable for strolling along the water's edge. The location of the esplanade will offer views of the Anacostia River and beyond.









