



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: April 2, 2020

PROJECT 11th Street Bridge Park 11th Street Bridge, Southeast Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 7755
SUBMITTED BY District of Columbia Department of Transportation	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 8.10(70.00)45088
REVIEW AUTHORITY District Projects Outside the Central Area per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of preliminary site development plans
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve preliminary site development plans with comments
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has submitted preliminary site development plans for the 11th Street Bridge Park, located in southeast Washington, DC. The project seeks to reuse the existing piers from the old 11th Street Bridge crossing at the Anacostia River to create an urban destination and park. A national competition, led by Building Bridges Across the River and the District Office of Planning (OP), in coordination with DDOT, selected a conceptual design for the bridge park from the winning team of OMA + OLIN. The Commission reviewed the concept plan in late 2017 and since that time, DDOT and the design team have continued to study the feasibility of the design and the existing structure. Overall, the major components of the design have not changed, and the applicant has continued to coordinate with the relevant stakeholders, including both the Department of the Navy and the National Park Service (NPS).

The project is focused on the success of four goals. These goals include:

- Economic - Serve as an anchor for inclusive economic opportunity
- Environment - Re-engage residents with the Anacostia River
- Health - Improve public health disparities; and
- Social - Reconnect Communities

The park will serve as an area of interest for DC residents and visitors, but also as a device to bridge the gap between the two wards. The Navy Yard and Capitol Hill are located on the northern end, while Anacostia Park and historic Anacostia are located on the southern end. Passing over the Anacostia River, the proposed bridge park will use the existing bridge piers, which were built in 1960. Piers 12 and 13 were more recently updated with pedestrian overlooks in 2013. Immediately to the north, the 11th Street local bridge was constructed in 2012, along with the bridges for I-695 (Southeast Freeway).

KEY INFORMATION

- The 11th Street Bridge Park will cross the Anacostia River in Washington, DC, connecting the Washington Navy Yard on the north and Anacostia Park on the south.
- A national competition, led by Building Bridges Across the River and the District Office of Planning, in coordination with DDOT, selected a conceptual design for the bridge park from the winning team of OMA + OLIN.
- The park will use the piers of the old 11th Street Bridge, which was replaced with an adjacent bridge in 2012.
- DDOT has worked with Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP to perform a feasibility study and engineering analysis of the proposed design and the structural capacity of the existing piers.
- The Commission reviewed the concept plans for the project in November 2017 and requested that the applicant provide a lighting plan, additional details on stormwater management, coordinate with the Department of the Navy regarding security concerns at the Navy Yard, and improve the pedestrian and bicycle connection to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.
- The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project on October 19, 2017 and provided comments on the proposal related to improving overall user access and accessibility, how the design can encourage physical activity, and encouraged the use of native plants.
- The project materials have been updated to include additional lighting details, stormwater information, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and modifications to address concerns by the Department of the Navy.
- The project will require a transfer of jurisdiction for portions of the land at the south landing of the park along Anacostia River along Anacostia Drive. NCPC must approve any transfers of jurisdiction. The applicant anticipates submitting this as a separate application later this year.

RECOMMENDATION

Approves the preliminary site development plans for the proposed 11th Street Bridge Park, located in Southeast Washington, DC.

Comments favorably on the proposed 11th Street Bridge Park, noting the park will increase community connectivity and create welcoming and vibrant spaces that enhance the user experience and foster civic and local uses.

Requests that the applicant provide additional details on the bicycle and pedestrian signage and shared path materials for inclusion in the final submission.

Requests that the applicant provide additional information regarding the lighting plan, including illumination levels and renderings, that demonstrate the cumulative lighting impacts, for inclusion in the final submission.

Notes the applicant has coordinated with the Department of Navy to address concerns related to visibility and access to the Washington Navy Yard which is located just north of the bridge park.

Requests the applicant further coordinate with the National Park Service on any proposed features within Anacostia Park and specifically the pedestrian and bicycle connections from the bridge to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.

Notes the Commission has approval authority over any transfers from federal to District jurisdiction.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	February 2016 – Information Presentation. November 2017 – Concept Plan Review.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Approval of Final Site Development Plans – Approval of Transfer of Jurisdiction from NPS to DC

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) has submitted preliminary site development design plans for the 11th Street Bridge Park, located in southeast Washington, DC. The project seeks to reuse the existing piers from the old 11th Street Bridge crossing at the Anacostia River to create an urban destination and park that connects from the Navy Yard to Anacostia Park and the surrounding community. The park will be approximately 1000 feet long, 63.5 feet tall at the highest point, and have a site area of over three acres. The design seeks to integrate the bridge architecture, landscape, river setting and program elements into a cohesive design that links neighborhoods on both sides of the river. The park program includes an amphitheater, café, environmental education center and a variety of gathering spaces, as well as bicycle and pedestrian circulation. The project team has coordinated with several federal and local agencies, as well as the local communities. As such, staff recommends the **Commission comment favorably on the proposed 11th Street Bridge Park, noting the park will increase community connectivity and create welcoming and vibrant spaces that enhance the user experience and foster civic and local uses.**

Analysis

The 11th Street Bridge Park is located in the Southeast quadrant of Washington DC, and will be constructed on top of old bridge piers spanning the Anacostia River, connecting the historic

Anacostia and Capitol Hill neighborhoods. The project site is located between the Washington Navy Yard on the west and the National Park Service's Anacostia Park on east. The Bridge Park will be the city's first elevated park, an iconic architectural symbol across the Anacostia River, and a new venue for recreation, arts and environmental education. The project is being constructed in coordination with Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC, a local non-profit.

In 2011, the Commission approved the preliminary and final design for the replacement of the 11th Street Bridge. The purpose of the project was to improve the highway connection between the Southeast/Southwest Freeway (I-695) and the Anacostia Freeway (I-295) and to separate local and interstate traffic by building several bridge spans. The project replaced a 40-year-old pair of bridges across the Anacostia River, and allowed for stronger neighborhood connections across the river and provided safety enhancements to the bridge and ramp structures. Today, the bridges have been built, and the proposed park will be located on top of the old downstream bridge infrastructure.

From the beginning, community engagement and feedback have driven the design principles and programming concepts of the 11th Street Bridge Park. Further, the Bridge Park will be more than just an innovative public space. It symbolizes a new connection across the Anacostia River, stitching together a booming area of the city and one that has long been overlooked and excluded from the city's economic progress. The 11th Street Bridge Park is an example of the City working together with residents to create a new space for the community on both sides of the Anacostia River. Proposed programming includes outdoor performance spaces; playgrounds; urban agriculture; classrooms; public art; and kayak and canoe launches.

The 11th Street Bridge Park has four goals: create a healthy community by establishing a safe place for residents to exercise and play; connect the community with the Anacostia River; reconnect the neighborhoods of Anacostia / Fairlawn and Capitol Hill / Navy Yard; and generate new jobs and economic activity. In March 2014, the 11th Street Bridge Park staff organized a nationwide three-stage competition informed by over 400 community meetings to transform an old freeway bridge into a new, one of a kind civic space over the Anacostia River. Over eighty design firms submitted proposals, and after a seven-month selection process, the competition jury selected the design by OMA + OLIN in October 2014. The winning team captured ideas from residents on both sides of the river and across the city to create a literal "X" intersection and a dynamic, multi-layered amenity for both sides of the river.

Following the information presentation, the project team conducted a feasibility study of the design and further evaluated the existing piers. The concept was also reviewed for loading, emergency egress, accessibility and other requirements. Through the study, DDOT found the pier to be in good condition. However, the loading demands of the original design exceeded the capacity of the piers and foundations. As a result, the park design was modified to address the structural issues, but also to accommodate the variety of other program and operational needs associated with the park. The concept design, reviewed by the Commission in November 2017 was substantially similar to the original concept, but was reduced modestly while retaining the main program elements. A new multi-column pier and two additional support columns were added to support the bridge structure. At the same time, the environmental education center was moved outside the

flood plain and south of Anacostia Drive. A continuous access route was added to allow for emergency vehicles and servicing. The proposed play space was moved onto the deck of the bridge and closer to the waterfall and café.

Since the review of the concept design, the project team has made minor adjustments to the plan and addressed the areas requested by the Commission. In general, staff finds the changes necessary and beneficial to the bridge design. A variety of landscape palettes have been developed which will enhance the visitor experience, promote shade and highlight the park's relationship to its river setting. The Comprehensive Plan calls for incorporating trees and vegetation into plans and projects to absorb carbon dioxide, moderate temperatures, minimize energy consumption, reduce pollution, and mitigate stormwater runoff.

The project team has submitted information on the proposed lighting strategy including fixture details and locations. However, the cumulative illumination levels of the lighting strategy and potential impact on the natural river setting and adjacent neighborhoods was not included. As the final design is developed, additional information regarding the proposed lighting strategy will be particularly important. The bridge will be visible from throughout the city and is also a natural riparian corridor. As such, lighting levels should be appropriate to meet design needs and minimum safety standards, while minimizing excess light, as well as upward and horizontal spillage. Therefore, staff suggests the **Commission request the applicant provide additional details to supplement the lighting plan, including illumination levels and renderings, for inclusion in the next submission.**

Character of the Riverfront

The proposed bridge park intends to create welcoming and vibrant spaces that enhance the user experience and foster civic and local uses. This is consistent with policies set forth in the Urban Design element of the Comprehensive Plan. Further, a high-quality public realm will reinforce Washington's national image, as well as everyday experiences for residents and visitors alike. The park will also promote waterfront access, and highlight the Anacostia River's recreational, ecological, and scenic qualities. Staff notes that the South Capitol Bridge, located less than a mile downstream, is also being rebuilt with a new contemporary design. Both the 11th Street Bridge Park and the South Capitol Bridge reflect a renewed emphasis on Washington, DC as a riverfront city.

Transportation and Access

The Comprehensive Plan encourages biking, walking, transit, and other non-single-occupancy modes of transportation for visitors. The proposed bridge park will be accessible by a variety of different transportation options. The Anacostia and Navy Yard Metro Stations are both about a 20-minute walk from the bridge. Bus service is also frequent in the area. No new parking will be provided at the bridge. However, several parking garages are located in close proximity, including the Anacostia Metro Station.

The revised preliminary design further promotes pedestrian and bicycle access, as both will be essential in ensuring a successful park. From the north side, pedestrians will access the bridge where it lands adjacent to the Navy Yard and the existing 11th Street Bridge. On the south side, the bridge connects to the adjacent grade, and paths and ramps allow access down to Anacostia Drive, Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Connections will allow both bicycles and pedestrians to cross over from the existing bridge to the park bridge. Thru-bicycle access will primarily be along the existing 11th Street Bridge, although a shared bicycle/pedestrian path will allow direct access to the bridge programming. Due to the activity-based nature of the bridge park design, utilizing a shared bicycle/pedestrian path through the park could become problematic when usage increases. Appropriate wayfinding and materials can help mitigate conflicts on a shared path and staff suggests the **Commission request that the applicant provide additional details on the bicycle and pedestrian signage and shared path materials for inclusion in the final submission.**

Both north and south bridge landings are critically important to allowing access to the park. These connections should be clear, safe and comfortable for all park users. Staff recognizes that the applicant has continued to develop the details for these connections as part of the preliminary review. However, the pedestrian and bicycle connections from the bridge across Anacostia Drive should be clarified, as the trail would require a crosswalk at grade.

Coordination

The project team has coordinated with numerous federal and local agencies, as well as the surrounding communities. This has included meetings with NCPC staff, the Commission of Fine Arts, Federal Highway Administration, US Army Corps of Engineers, NPS and others. The project team has also met countless times with District agencies and a variety of community stakeholders near the bridge site. At the concept design stage, the Commission requested the applicant further coordinate with the Department of the Navy regarding any security impacts of the project to the Washington Navy Yard. The design team met with the Department of the Navy and revised several design components to address these issues. Specifically, the preliminary design added a six-foot tall glass wall around the Capitol look out to minimize views into the Navy Yard. The design team also modified the planting scheme adjacent to the access to the bridge along the Navy Yard wall. On the south end of the bridge, Anacostia Park is controlled by NPS. As noted previously, the pedestrian and bicycle connections at Anacostia Drive should be safe and clear. Therefore, staff suggests the **Commission request the applicant further coordinate with the National Park Service on any proposed park features, and specifically the pedestrian and bicycle connections from the bridge to the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.**

Transfers of Jurisdiction

The project design will require portions of land under NPS jurisdiction to be transferred to the District for transportation or park use. As the project plans are further developed, the exact jurisdictional limits will be further clarified. Staff **notes the Commission has approval authority over any transfers from federal to District jurisdiction.** The applicant has indicated that these discussions are ongoing.

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

As noted above, this project meets basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff has reviewed policies related to parks and open space, urban design, transportation, and visitor experience in evaluating the proposed bridge park. The Federal Environment Element specifically recommends that sites reduce levels of light pollution by selecting the appropriate level of lighting to meet design needs, while minimizing excess light, and designing light fixtures to eliminate upward and horizontal spillage. The project team should update the lighting package to address the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure the overall lighting is appropriate.

National Historic Preservation Act

NCPC has an advisory review of the project, and therefore does not have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). NCPC has approval authority over any transfers of jurisdiction between NPS and DDOT, and therefore NCPC will have a NHPA responsibility at that time.

National Environmental Policy Act

DDOT completed an extensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of the design process for the reconstruction of the 11th Street Bridge. They have indicated that they are currently re-evaluating the EIS to determine any potential impacts from the proposed bridge park. As this District project is outside the Central Area, NCPC has an advisory review, and therefore does not have a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) obligation. However, NCPC has approval authority over the transfers of jurisdiction between NPS and DDOT, and therefore NCPC will rely on the re-evaluation of the EIS to inform its decision regarding that action.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

On March 11, 2020, the Coordinating Committee forwarded the concept design to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies included NCPC, DOEE, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, the General Services Administration and DDOT.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed and approved the concept at their October 19, 2017 meeting, with comments to be addressed as the design is further refined.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package
- NEPA Documents
- Section 106 Documents

Prepared by Jamie Herr
03/04/2020

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

11th Street Bridge Park

11th Street Bridge, Southeast, Washington DC

Approval of Preliminary Site Development Plans

District of Columbia Department of Transportation

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: April 2, 2020

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary Site Development Plans

Session: Staff Presentation

NCPC Review Officer: Jamie Herr

NCPC File Number: 7755

Project Summary:

Project summary:

The 11th Street Bridge Park project seeks to reuse the existing infrastructure from the old 11th Street Bridge and create an urban destination and park south of the local 11th Street Bridge over the Anacostia River. The project is focused on the success of four goals. These goals include: Economic - Serve as an anchor for inclusive economic opportunity; Environment - Re-engage residents with the Anacostia River; Health - Improve public health disparities; and Social - Reconnect Communities.

The proposed bridge park is located in Washington DC adjacent to the 11th Street local bridge. The park will serve as an area of interest for DC residents and visitors, but also as a device to bridge the between the two connecting wards. The site is characterized as urban with the majority of the commercial development to the northern end of the project and the Anacostia Park on the southern end. The waterway beneath the proposed bridge park is the Anacostia River. The proposed bridge park will use the existing piers, which were built in 1960. Piers 12 and 13 were more recently updated with pedestrian overlooks in 2013. The 11th Street local bridge was recently constructed in 2012, along with the bridges for I-695 (Southeast Freeway).

Project Summary

Project Status

The project team has progressed the concept design to preliminary design with more detail into the structural aspects of the design, as well as programming and landscape. Through meetings with key stakeholders during this phase, key components have been modified to meet the facility needs, as well as provide a safer feel to the surrounding businesses. The coordination with the Navy was to help mitigate their concerns of the new viewshed the Capitol Overlook provided visitors to the park onto their property. Proposed sight mitigation and safety restraints were presented to the Navy on December 12. This meeting provided a resolution of higher glass walls at the Capitol Overlook.

Concurrently with the Preliminary Design, the team has progressed the NEPA documentation for the project. The NEPA documentation includes the following:

Federal Highway – Re-evaluation of FINAL EIS of the 11th Street Bridges

NPS – Categorical Exclusion for Land Transfer

DDOT – Wetland Delineation Report (including Natural Resources – Anacostia River)

DC SHPO – Historical Preservation (Historic Seawall Anacostia Park)

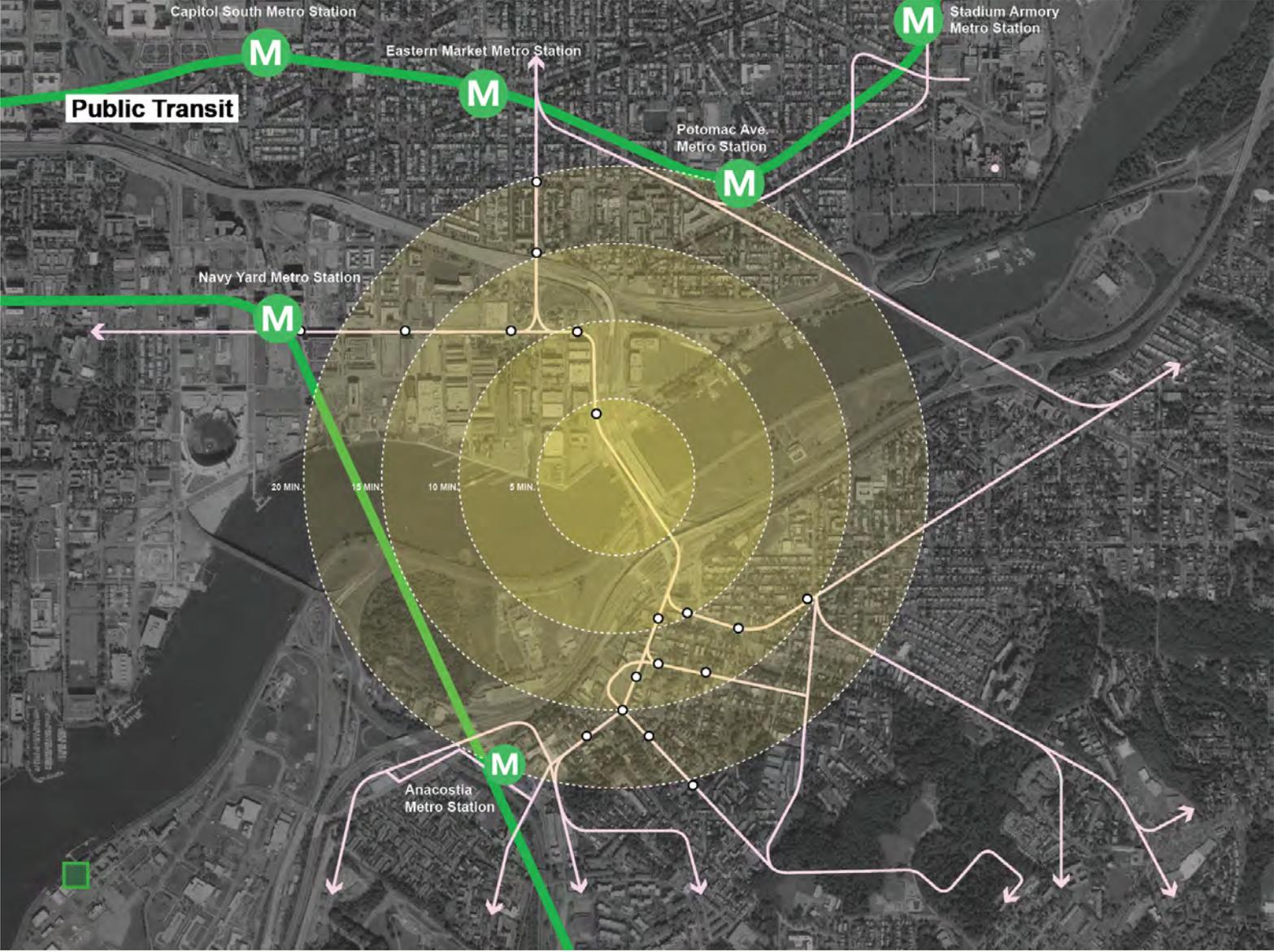
Through the NEPA Process, the design team coordinated with over 30 jurisdictional agencies, including in person meetings with FHWA, USACE, USCG, and the Navy. In addition to meeting with jurisdictional agencies, a public meeting was held at Anacostia High School on September 25, 2019 to provide a project update to Wards 6 and 8. The meeting offered a comment response portion, in which, attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions. After the Q&A portion, the design team offered a one-on-one breakout session to the attendees for a more person approach to ask questions on the design.

Site Location

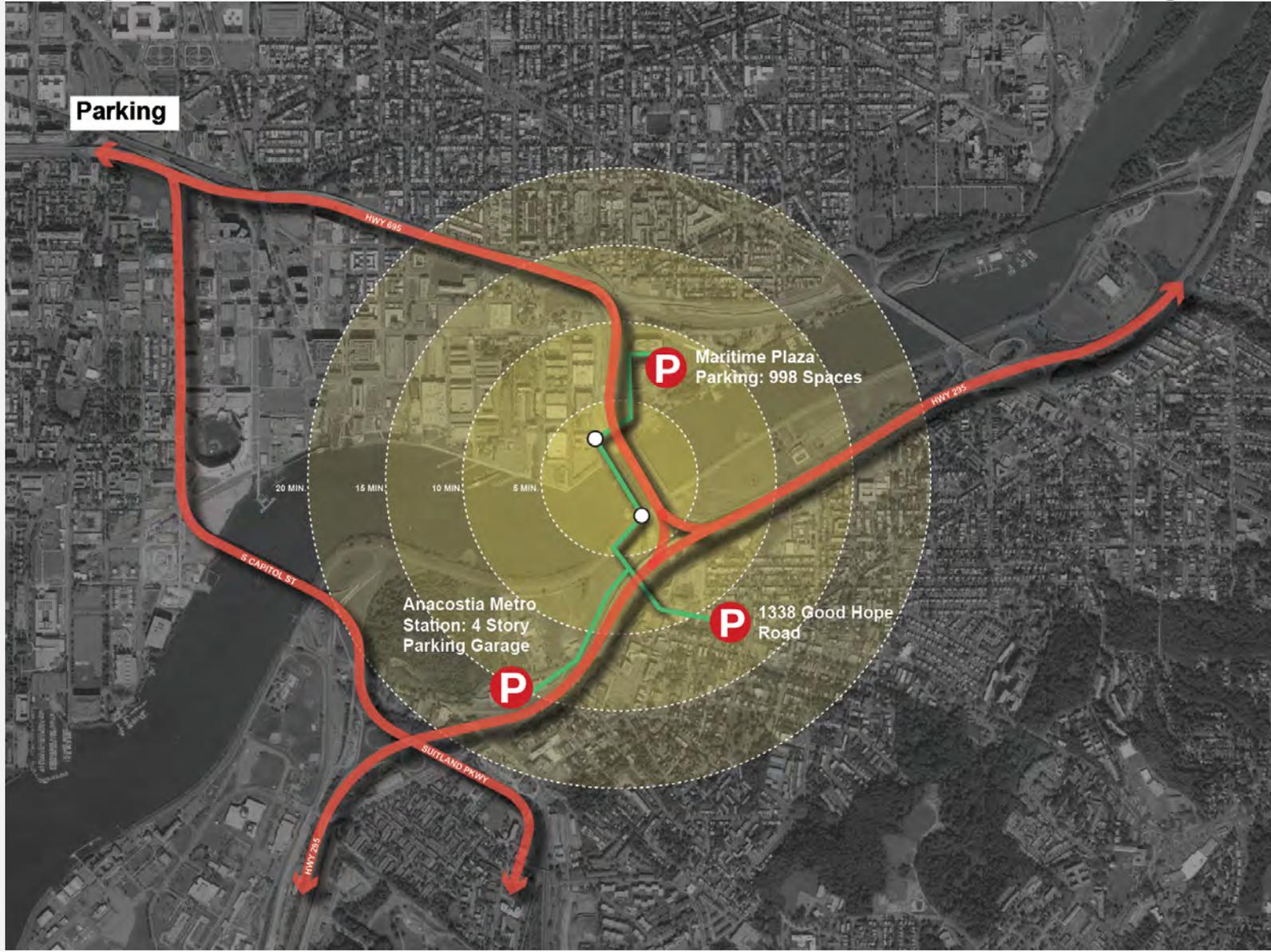


Location Map

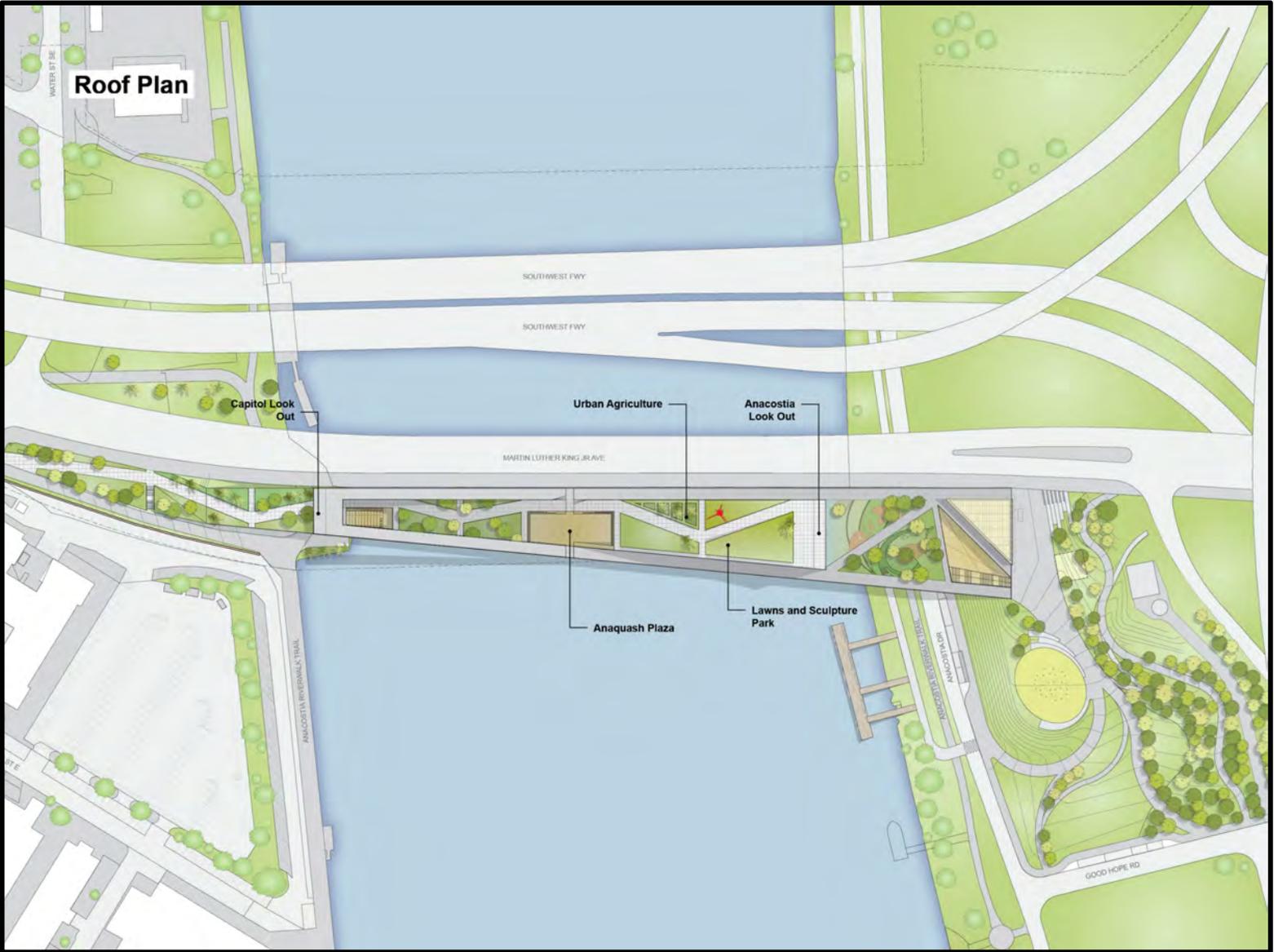
11th Street Bridge Park: Transit Context



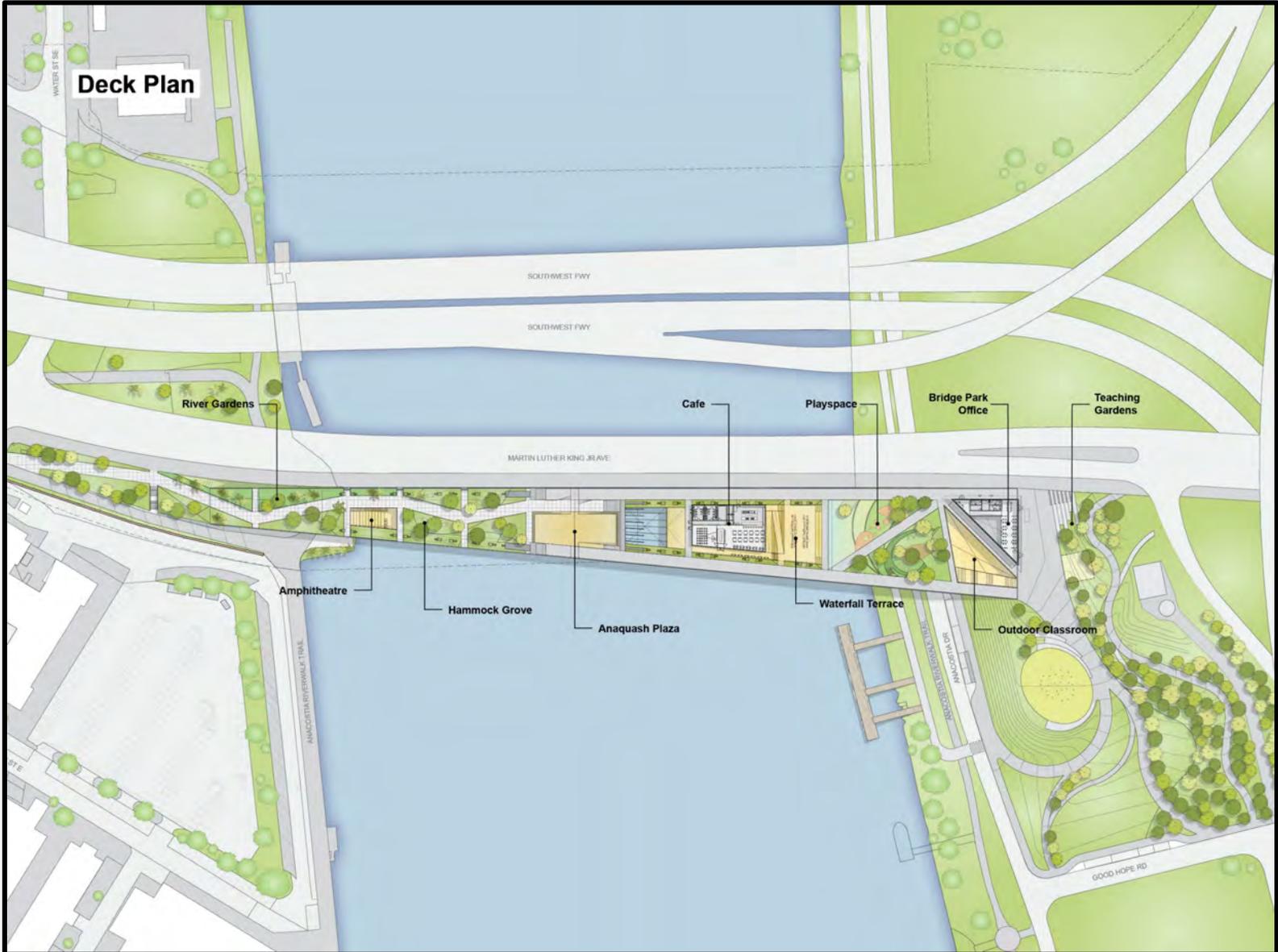
11th Street Bridge Park: Transportation and Parking Context



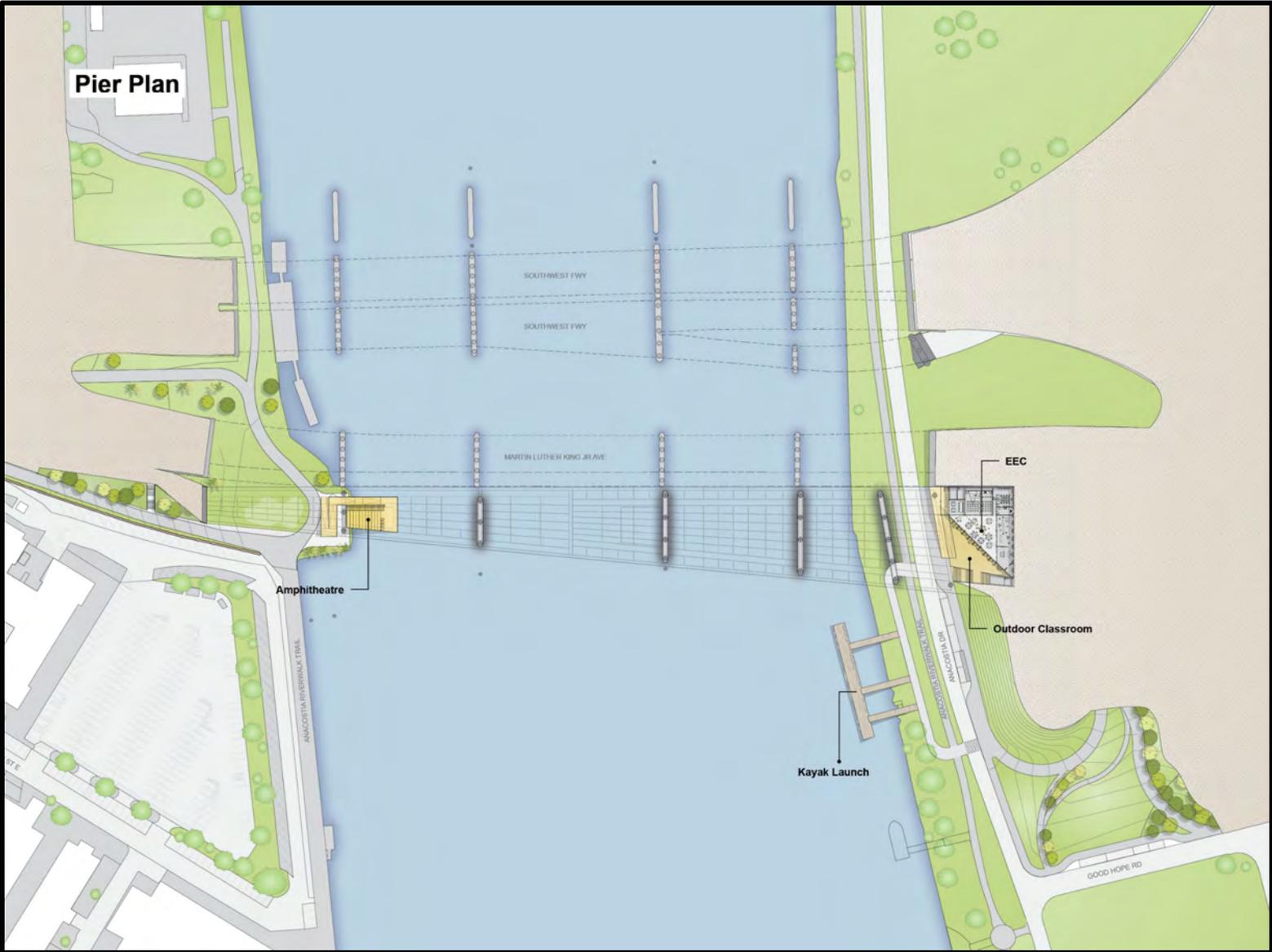
11th Street Bridge Park Programming: Roof Plan



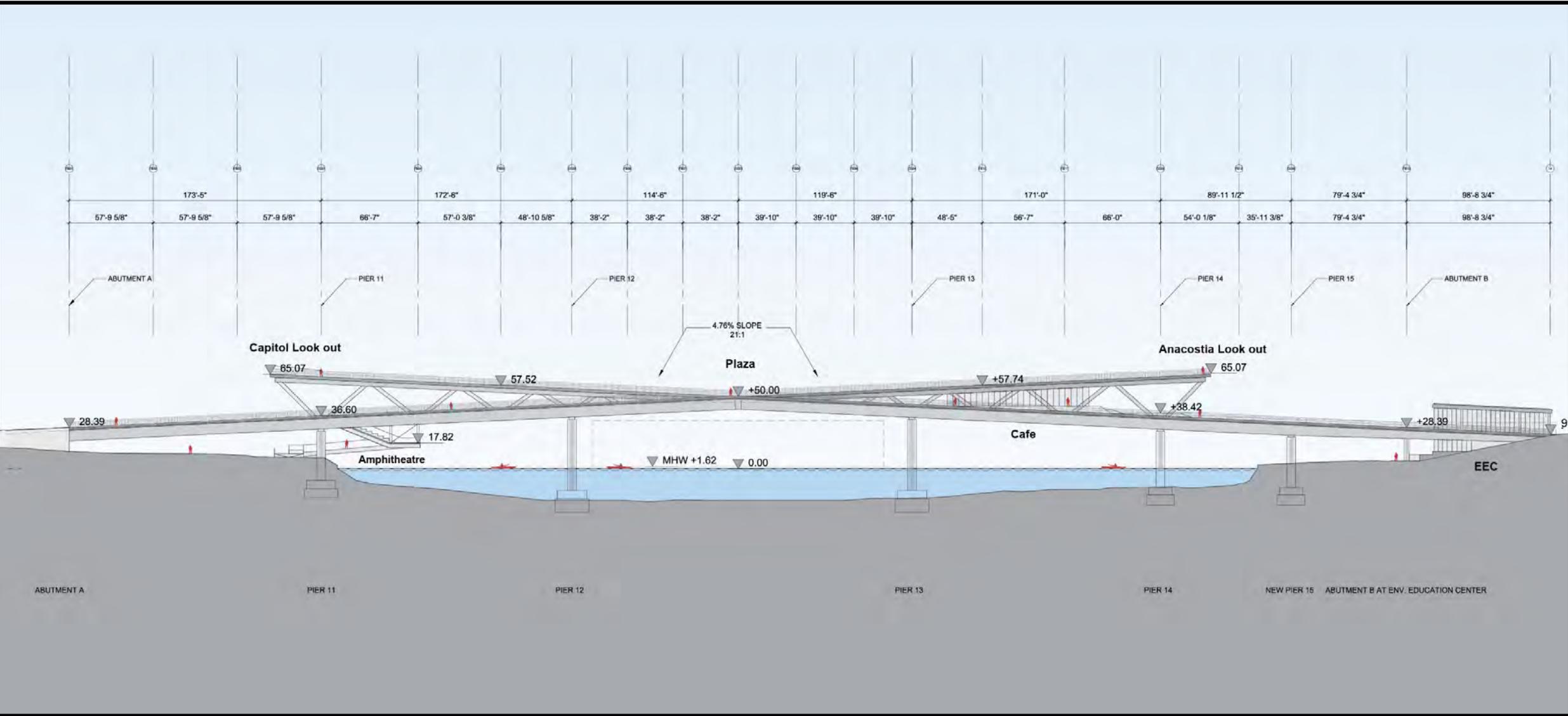
11th Street Bridge Park Programming: Deck Plan



11th Street Bridge Park Programming: Pier Plan



11th Street Bridge Park: Elevation View



11th Street Bridge Park: Rendering View



11th Street Bridge Park: View from Navy Yard



11th Street Bridge Park: View from Anacostia



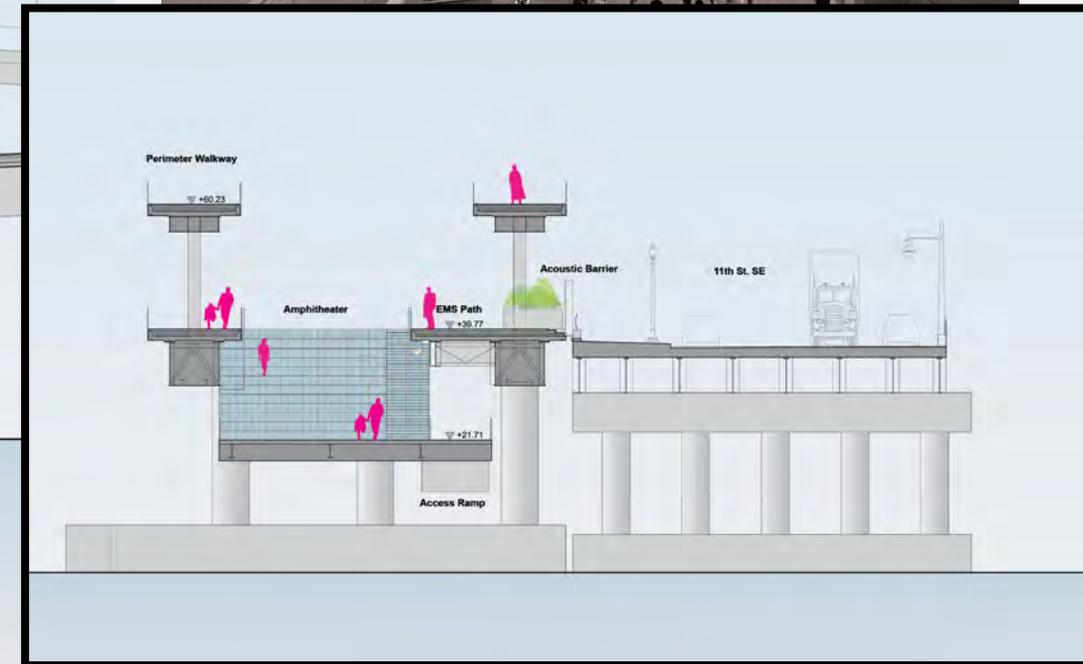
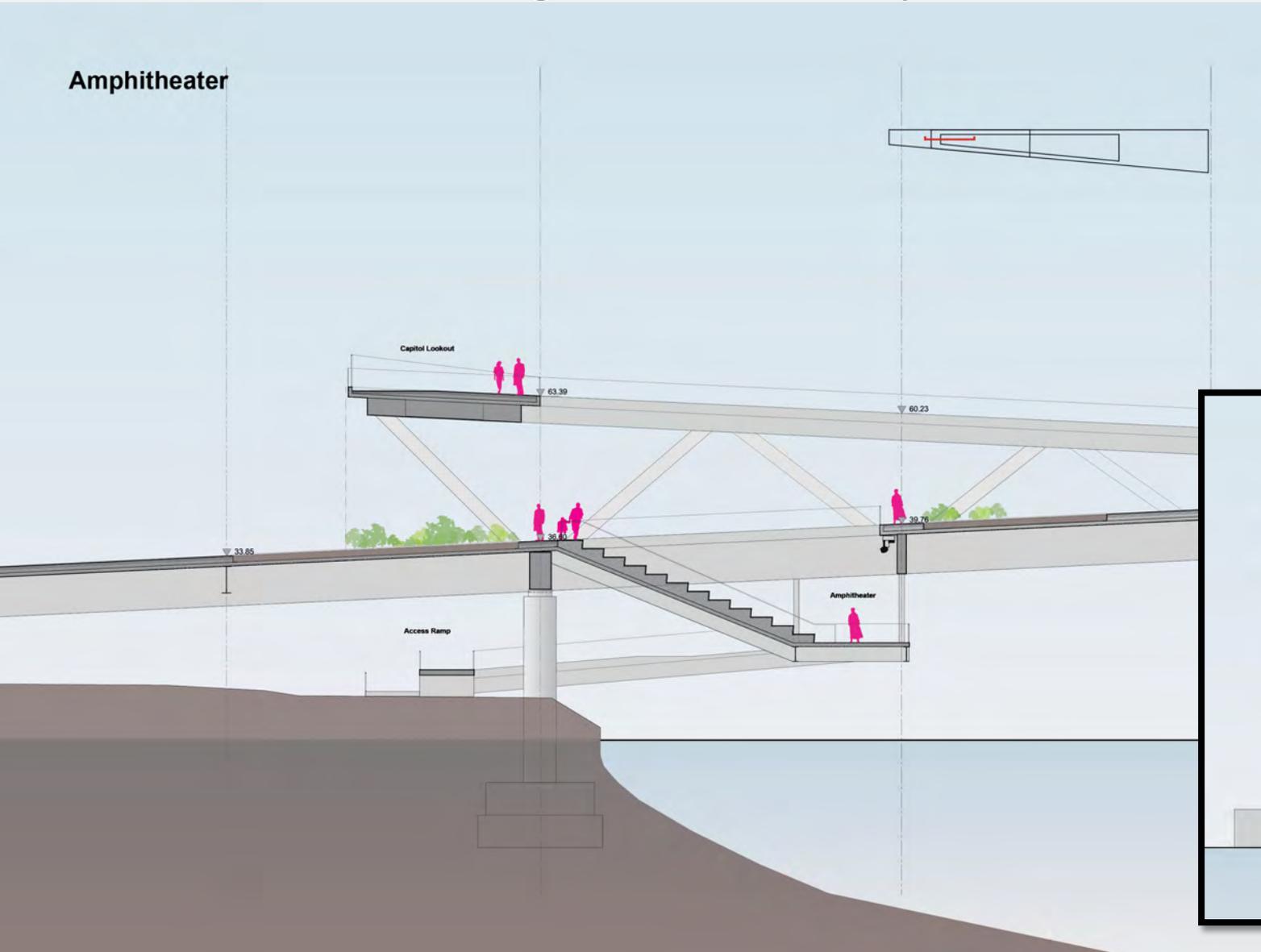
11th Street Bridge Park: Navy Yard Approach



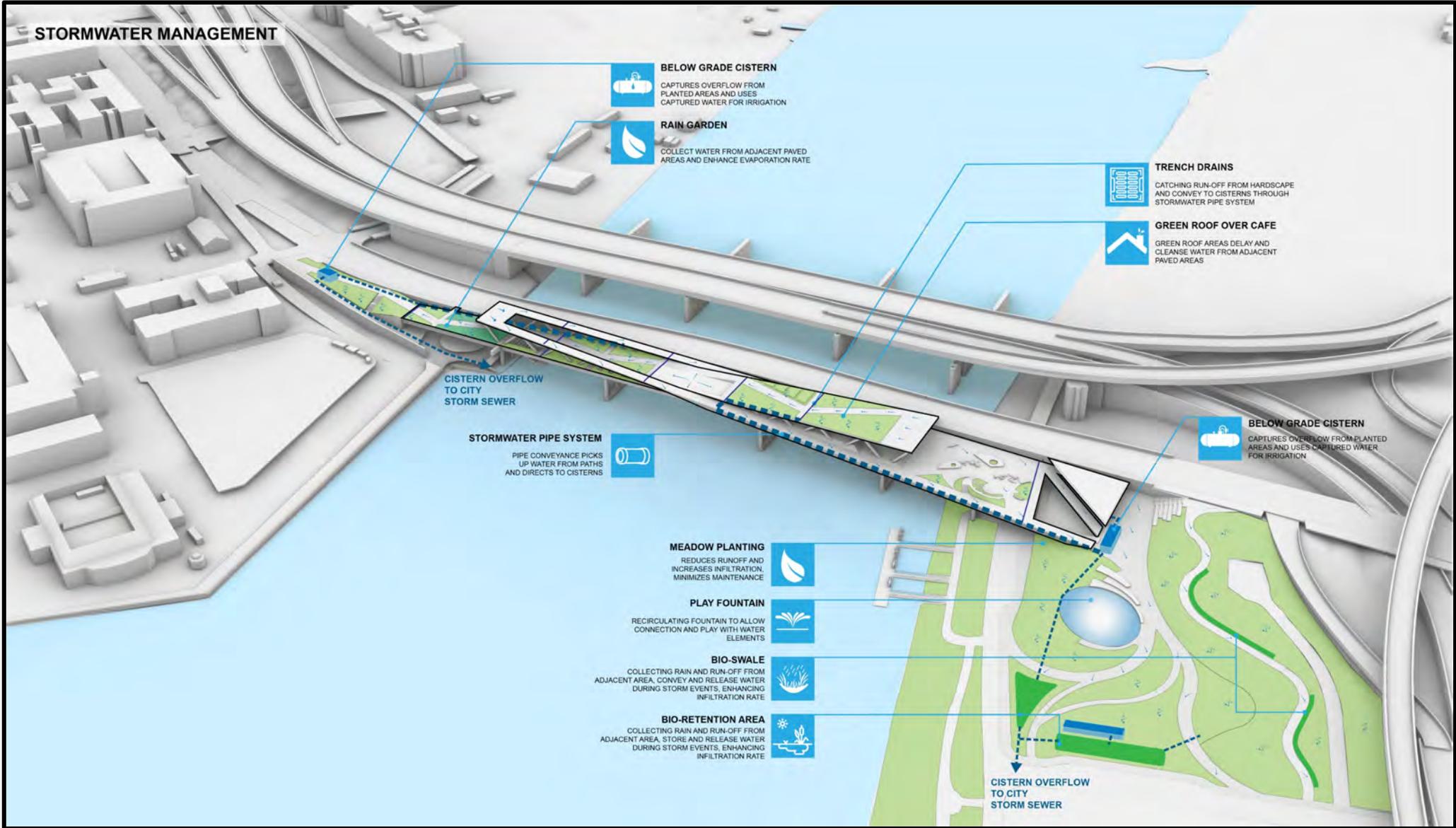
11th Street Bridge Park: View from Roof looking south



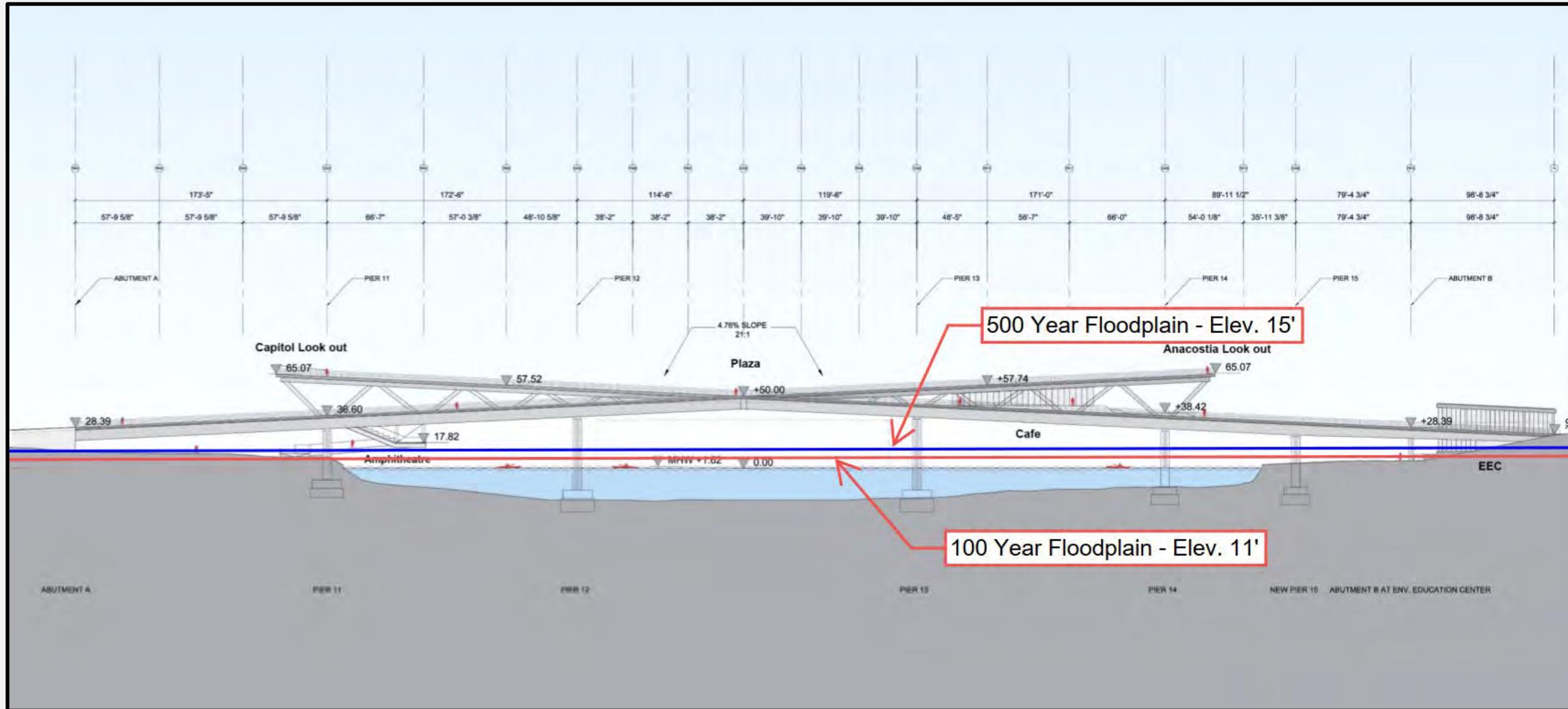
11th Street Bridge Park: Amphitheater



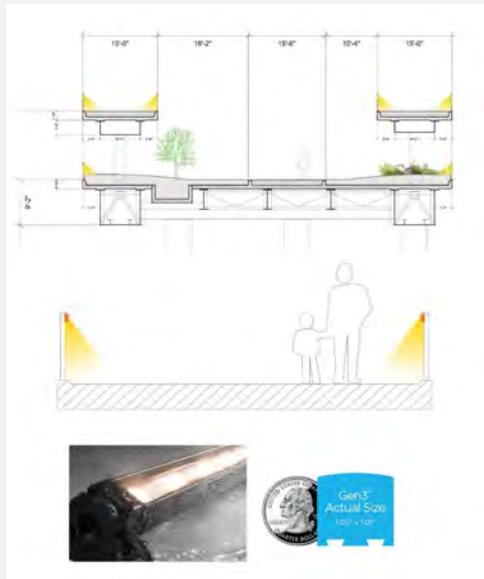
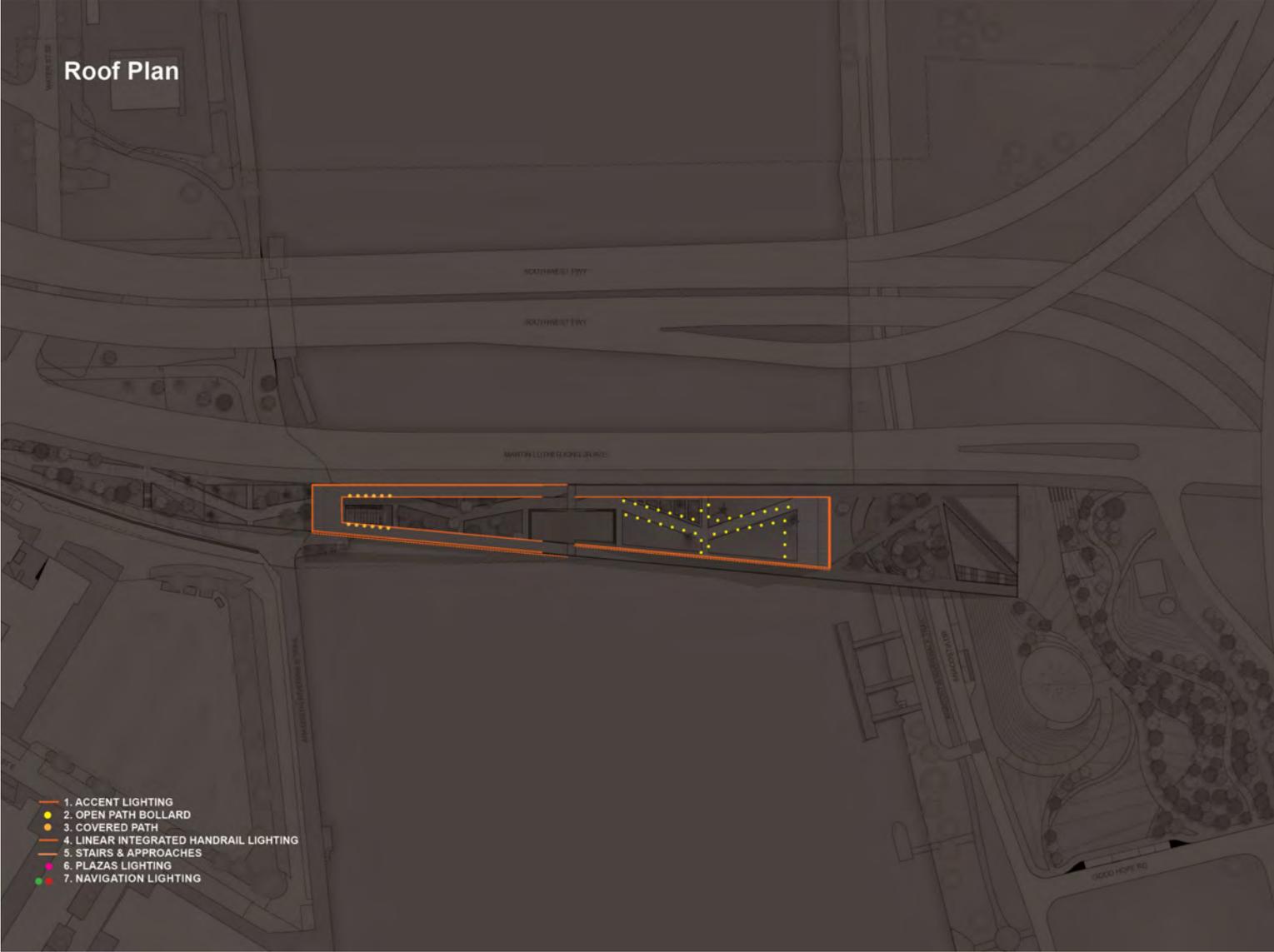
11th Street Bridge Park: Stormwater Management



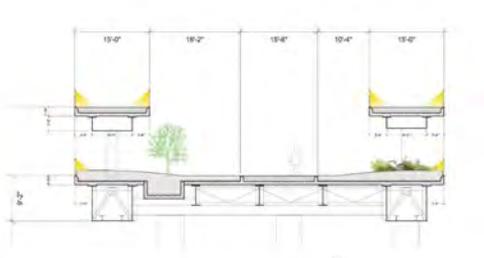
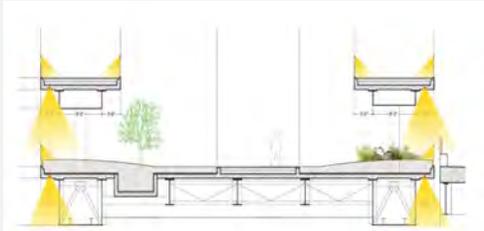
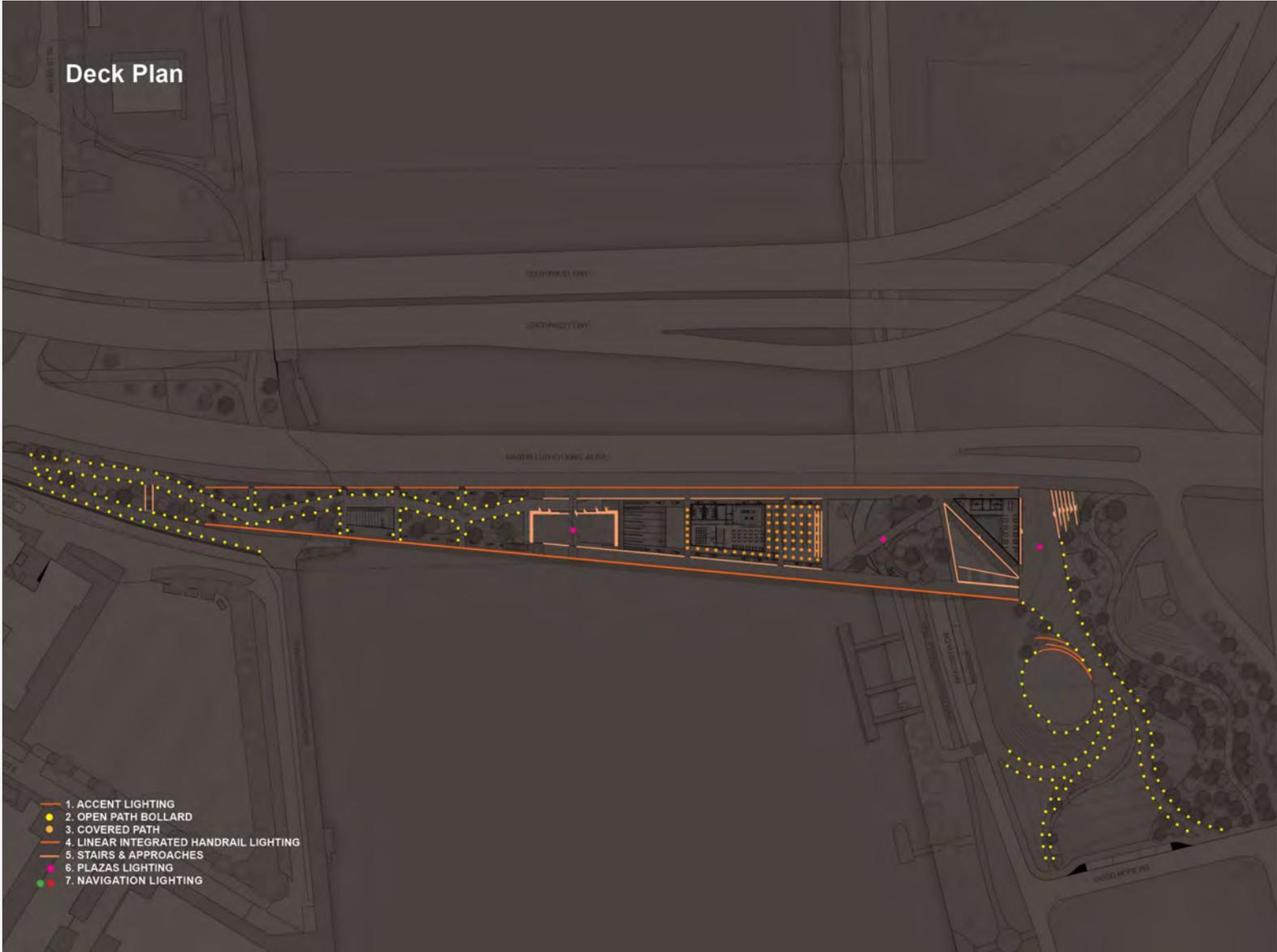
11th Street Bridge Park: Floodplain



11th Street Bridge Park: Roof Lighting



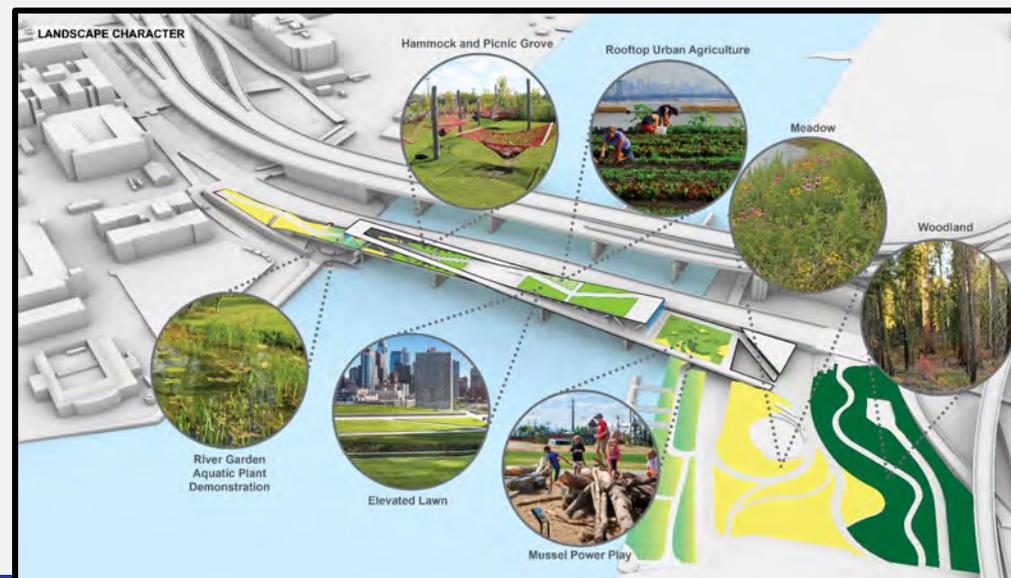
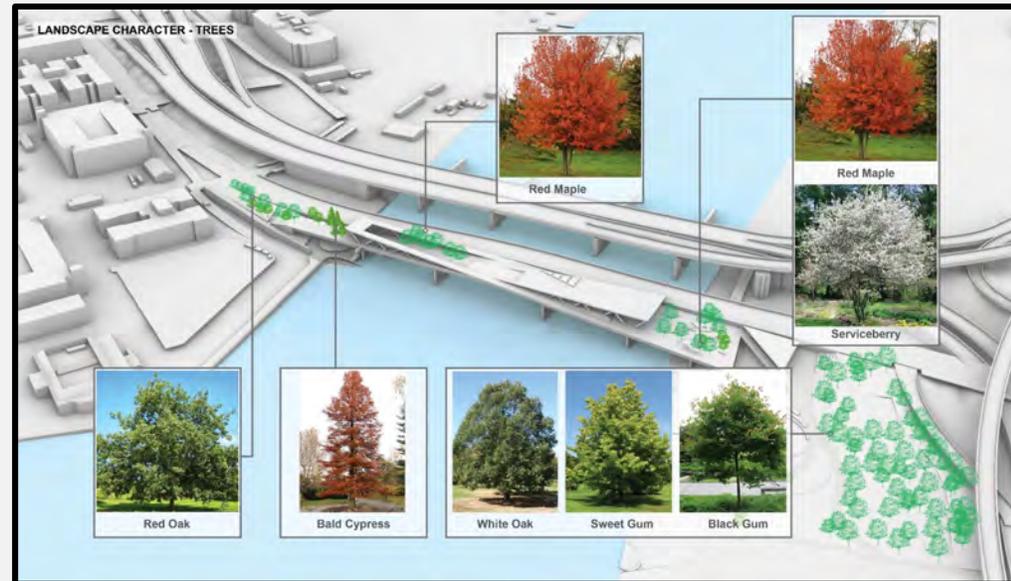
11th Street Bridge Park: Deck Lighting



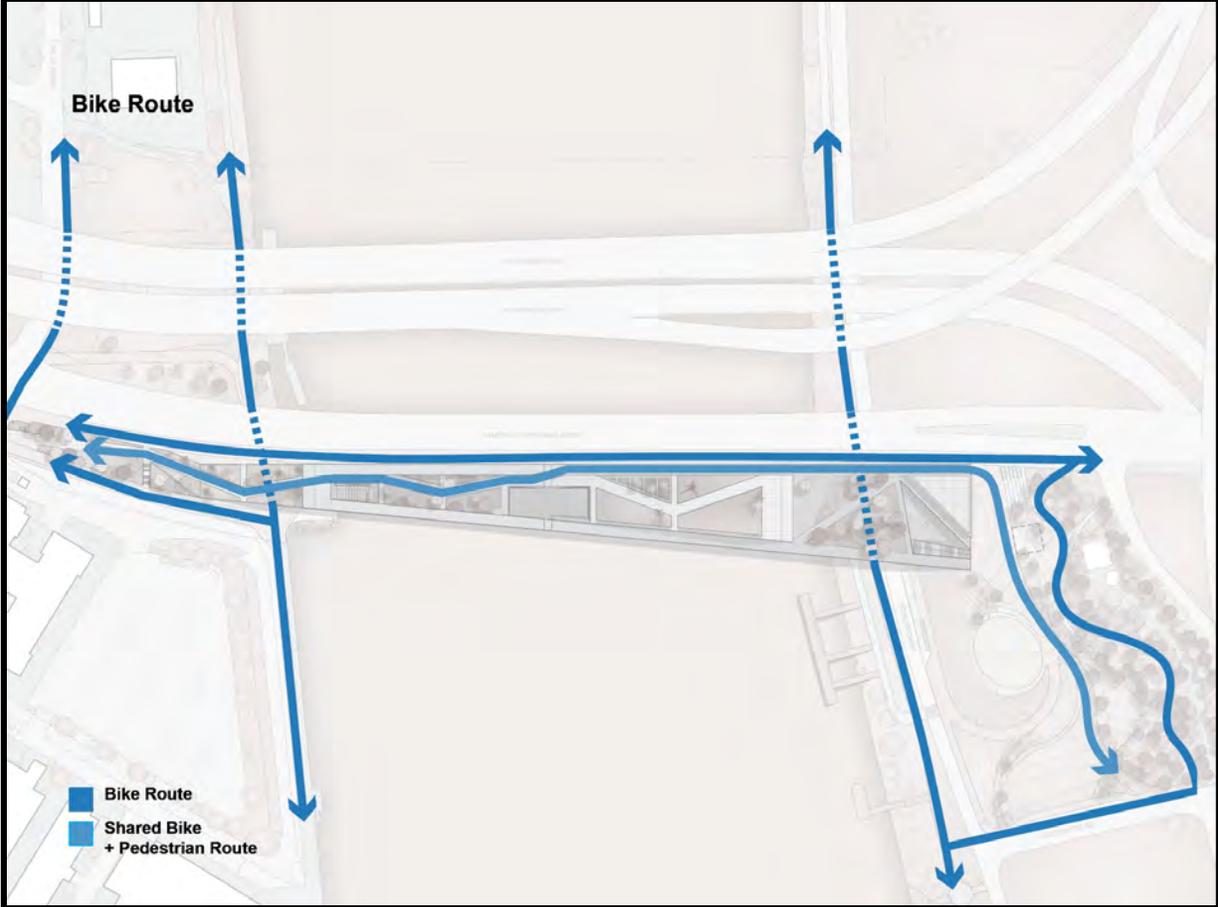
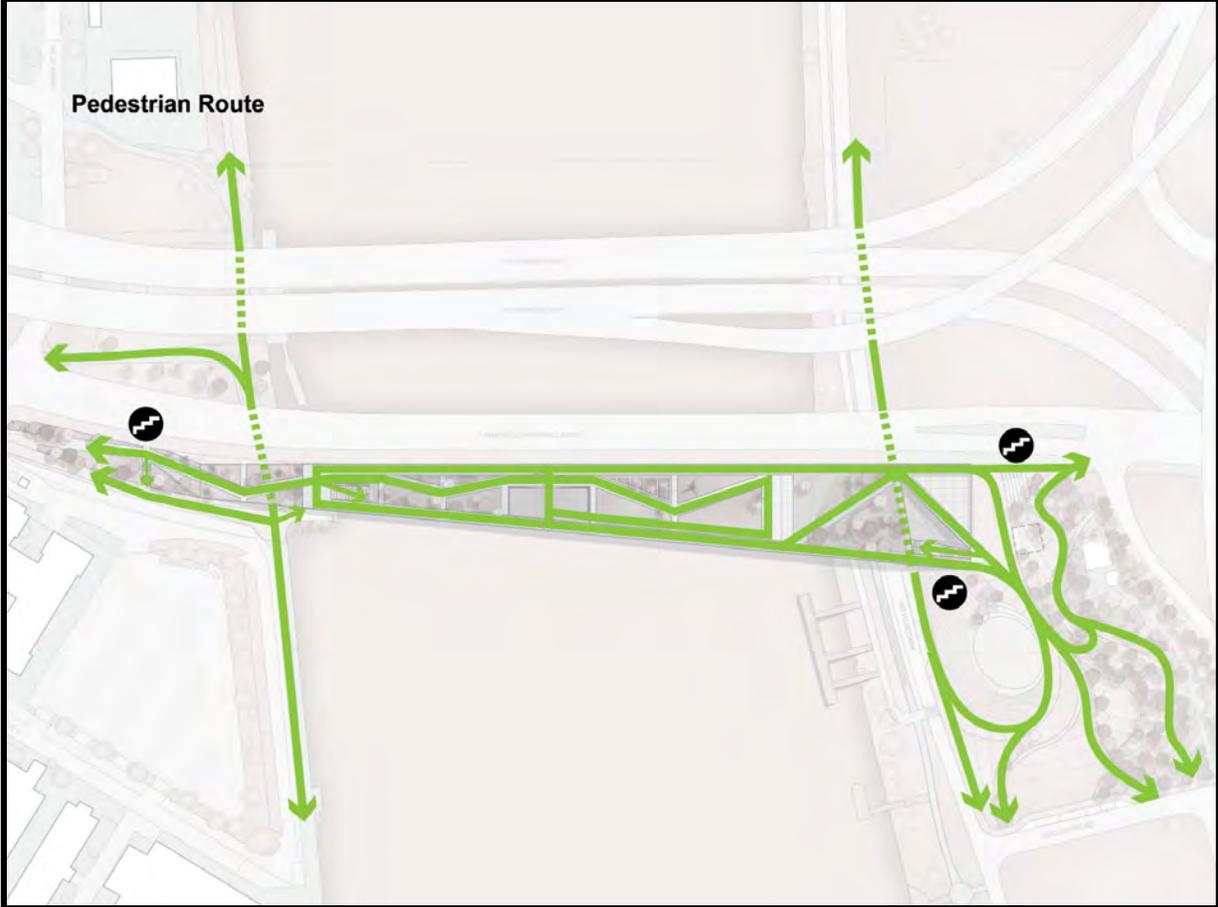
11th Street Bridge Park: Pier Lighting



11th Street Bridge Park: Landscape Materials



11th Street Bridge Park: Accessibility



11th Street Bridge Park: Playspace



11th Street Bridge Park: Outdoor Classroom



11th Street Bridge Park: Anacostia Approach



MEETINGS CANCELLED

Due to the coronavirus public health emergency, the public meetings of the Old Georgetown Board scheduled for 2 April and the Commission of Fine Arts scheduled for 16 April 2020 have been cancelled. The Commission's staff remains on duty through telework and intermittent office hours. Please check <https://www.cfa.gov/about-cfa/news> or call (202) 504-2200 for additional information as it becomes available. (Updated: 3/20/20)

CFA 19/OCT/17-5

LOCATION:

11th Street, SE at the Anacostia River
Washington, DC

OWNER:

D.C. Department of Transportation

PROPERTY:

11th Street Bridge Park

DESCRIPTION:

New public park on old bridge piers

REVIEW TYPE:

Concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 17/MAR/16-1](#)

Letter

27 October 2017

Dear Mr. Marootian:

In its meeting of 19 October, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept submission for a new public park to be built on the piers of the recently demolished 11th Street Bridge, spanning the Anacostia River at 11th Street, SE. Commending the project team for a strong design and a clear presentation, the Commission members present recommended approval of the concept with the following comments.

The Commission members found that the current effort to reduce the project's scale has improved the design of the bridge park without compromising the original concept; as a result, specific elements have been refined, such as moving the play area from the river's edge into the elevated park, incorporating the education center into the bridge abutment, and reconfiguring the amphitheater. They recommended that the cafe, its outdoor seating, and the adjacent sidewalk be designed to ensure unimpeded pedestrian movement around this concentration of commercial activity to avoid the impression of privatizing public space. They also advised careful attention to facilitating broad public access to the bridge park, including passenger and handicapped drop-off areas, the realistic accommodation of parking, and pedestrian connections to the existing neighborhoods and new developments on both sides of the river.

In addition to the bridge park's strong ecological focus, the Commission members recommended considering how the park's design and amenities could encourage increased physical activity for visitors. They advised selecting certain

materials for their potential to improve human health, such as using charred bamboo screens to absorb particulate pollution from vehicle exhaust. They also suggested that the concept of native plants be broadened to include species that are adapted to this setting's altered ecology.

The Commission encouraged further consultation with the staff and looks forward to the review of the bridge park design as it is developed. As a quorum was not present for the review of this submission, the recommendation for approval will be placed on the administrative agenda for confirmation at the Commission's next meeting. As always, the staff is available to assist you.

Sincerely,

/s/Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Jeff Marootian, Acting Director
D.C. Department of Transportation
55 M Street, SE, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20003

cc: Scott Kratz, 11th Street Bridge Park
Hallie Boyce, OLIN
Jason Long, OMA