Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: April 2, 2026

PROJECT
New Stadium at RFK Campus
2400 East Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC

SUBMITTED BY
Mayor of the District of Columbia,
RFK Stadium Project Management Office

REVIEW AUTHORITY
District Projects Outside the Central Area
per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1)

NCPC FILE NUMBER
8721

NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER
8.40(38.00)46185

APPLICANT'S REQUEST
Approval of preliminary site and building plans

PROPOSED ACTION
Approve preliminary site and building plans with comments

ACTION ITEM TYPE
Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The District of Columbia's Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Stadium Project Management Office, in partnership with the Washington Commanders, has submitted preliminary site and building plans for a proposed new stadium and surrounding site improvements on the RFK Stadium Campus located in Washington, DC. The stadium project site is approximately 30 acres within the overall 180-acre RFK Campus and is generally bounded to the northeast by C Street, NE, to the southeast by Independence Avenue, SE, and to the west by 22nd Street, NE and SE. The site is positioned on axis with the East Capitol Street corridor. The applicant envisions the new roofed stadium for the Washington Commanders NFL Football Team serving as a venue for sports, arts, and cultural events, creating a year-round activity and entertainment center for District residents and visitors. The stadium will have 65,000 seats along with space for 5,000 people standing. Construction is anticipated to be complete in 2030.

Under the National Capital Planning Act, NCPC has advisory authority for District projects outside the Central Area. The Commission previously reviewed the project at the February 2026 meeting and was generally supportive of the conceptual design approach, providing several recommendations and requests for additional information to ensure the appropriateness of the design for the site as a prominent gateway. The applicant has responded to the Commission's recommendations as part of the current submission. The applicant anticipates submitting the stadium for final review in June or July 2026. Moving forward, NCPC will work with the District on the review of the overall Master Plan and other District projects on the campus as they are developed.

KEY INFORMATION

- The original RFK Stadium was constructed in 1961 and closed to the public in 2019. The building is currently being demolished with completion of demolition anticipated in mid-2026.
- The 2025 D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act allowed the transfer of administration of the RFK Stadium Campus from the National Park Service (NPS) to the District and allows mixed-use development of the campus.
- The new roofed stadium for the Washington Commanders NFL Football Team will have a 70,000-person capacity and will serve as a venue for year-round activity including sports, arts, and cultural events.
- The District's Zoning Administrator made a final determination that the stadium design complies with the Height Act on December 31, 2025. The determination letter is attached to this report.
- On opening day, two proposed adjacent parking garages and surrounding surface lots will provide up to 8,000 parking spaces (75% structured and 25% surface). The Commission will review the garages at a later date as they are developed.
- Under the National Capital Planning Act, NCPC has advisory authority for District projects outside the Central Area. The Commission previously reviewed concept plans for the project at the February 2026 meeting, and the applicant anticipates submitting the stadium for final review in June or July 2026.
- Overall, the applicant has been responsive to the Commission's comments and requests for additional information.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves preliminary site and building plans for a proposed new stadium and surrounding site improvements on the Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Memorial Stadium Campus, located in Washington, DC.

Stadium Design

Finds the proposed stadium design is appropriate for its setting as a prominent Capital Gateway on a preeminent linear view corridor identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Building elements reference the formal architecture of buildings in the Monumental Core, and the roof form responds to the importance of the East Capitol Street view corridor by lowering the height along the east-west axis.

Notes that as requested at concept plan review, the column spacing and design have been further detailed. In reference to classical fluted columns, eight flutes are articulated at the base of each of the stadium's columns blending into a solid roof support symbolizing the eight Wards of the

District united into one. The proposed column spacing is required structurally to support the stadium roof.

Encourages the applicant to continue to refine the north and south entries, which open to the surrounding neighborhoods, to ensure they are inviting and appropriately-scaled within the context of the monumental design.

Requests the applicant submit the following additional information regarding lighting and exterior graphics with the final submission to confirm alignment with Comprehensive Plan policies:

- Proposed exterior lighting levels in comparison to the U.S. Capitol Building and Washington Monument to ensure these structures remain the most prominent features in the nighttime skyline as outlined in Comprehensive Plan policy UD.B.1.5.
- The type, locations, size, and design of planned stadium exterior graphics such as significant signage, display screens, and projections, if proposed. The design should aim to balance entertainment needs with the public realm's overall visual character and not detract from other sites of civic importance as outlined in Comprehensive Plan policy UD.B.3.11.

Site Design

Notes that as recommended at concept plan review, the site design has been updated to include the following components:

- The festival plaza, west entry, and east plaza have a balanced and nearly symmetrical design that integrates formal elements such as an allée of trees, grand stairways, and elevated landscaped podium to emphasize the axial relationships along the East Capitol Street view corridor and reference the formal landscapes of the Monumental Core;
- The landscape design introduces wide planted areas along the stadium's plazas to buffer from the adjacent roadways;
- The general planting palette includes species native to the region and select species supportive of pollinators; and
- The primary loading ingress and egress will be through a north tunnel under the stadium grounds avoiding service entry impacts to the design of the stadium building.

Notes the proposal aims to avoid service entry impacts to the design of the stadium building by locating the primary loading dock ingress and egress through a north tunnel under the stadium grounds.

Recommends screening the loading tunnel entry from pedestrian pathways and seating areas with vegetation.

Requests additional siting information and design details in the final submission for the following:

- Planned stormwater facilities on the stadium site that will be visible to the public;
- Permanent kiosks and pavilions proposed around the stadium grounds; and
- Permanent perimeter security elements such as bollards and barriers.

Recommends that as the design of permanent perimeter security elements are developed their form and materials should respond to the architectural and landscape context in which they are located and complement and aesthetically enhance the character of the stadium grounds as guided by Urban Design Element policy UD.C.3.8.

Circulation and Parking

Supports the project's emphasis on multimodal access to the stadium including Metrorail, Metrobus, and upgraded pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, that will be encouraged through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures.

Notes the application includes additional information requested about two proposed parking garages; however, these will be developed independently from the stadium and will be separate submissions in the future.

Requests the applicant evaluate the following as part of any future parking garage submissions:

- Alternative orientations for the G1 and G2 garages to reduce visual impacts of views to the stadium and from adjacent neighborhoods while continuing to be in proximity to the pedestrian tunnels and highway access; and
- Lower garage heights, particularly for the G2 garage near the Kingman Park neighborhood, and/or phasing of garage upper floors as surrounding surface lots are developed; and
- Active uses lining the ground floors of the garages to improve the pedestrian experience and create opportunities for community serving uses, as these will be the only adjacent development in early phases.

Requests the transportation analysis from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the RFK Campus Master Plan be included with any future parking garage submissions to NCPC to identify any potential impacts resulting from the garages' locations and capacity.

Requests the applicant provide the universally accessible circulation routes throughout the site and to the stadium podium, and the wayfinding and signage approach throughout the site for visitors with the final submission.

Coordination

Notes the applicant began community and stakeholder engagement in early 2025 and this engagement continues with the development of the stadium design and overall RFK Campus Master Plan. In particular, coordination with federal stakeholders including NPS and the DC National Guard Armory is ongoing.

Recommends continued analysis and mitigation of potential event noise and nuisance impacts on surrounding residential areas.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	**February 2026** – Review of concept plans.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Review of final site and building plans. – Review of other District projects within the RFK Campus including parking structures and new Sportsplex.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The stadium site, positioned on axis with the U.S. Capitol and East Capitol Street near the banks of the Anacostia River, has long been considered an important location within the District. The site serves as a gateway to the L'Enfant City and is a direct link between Capitol Hill and adjacent neighborhoods with the river. NCPC has recognized the area as a significant site, as identified in the *Legacy Plan*, *Monumental Core Framework Plan,* and the agency's 2006 "RFK Stadium Site Redevelopment Study." Of particular interest to NCPC is the project's potential impacts to the system of streets, public spaces, and important viewsheds within the L'Enfant City, namely East Capitol Street, as a prominent gateway and major axial street. In addition to urban design and character considerations, impacts on NPS lands and adjacent federal facilities were evaluated along with general consistency with policies set forth in the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital.*

Commission comments at concept plan review in February 2026 were generally supportive of the stadium design approach with recommended revisions to specific site and building elements as well as requests for further information. In particular, the Commissioners requested the applicant provide information on all of the related RFK Stadium Campus project components that would be implemented at the time of stadium opening, including parking garages, the festival plaza, public transportation, multimodal improvements, loading, and the surrounding street network. Although additional refinement and information are requested for final review, overall, staff finds that the submitted preliminary plans are generally consistent with the policy guidance in the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and recommends the **Commission approve preliminary site and building plans for a proposed new stadium and surrounding site improvements on the RFK Memorial Stadium Campus, located in Washington, DC.**

Analysis

While the RFK Campus redevelopment includes five districts, the focus of the following analysis is the Stadium District development and related components that will be in place on opening day. Areas located outside the defined project site will be further developed with the DC Office of Planning Master Plan of the broader RFK Campus and future District project submissions.

Stadium Design

The stadium is located at a prominent Capital Gateway on a preeminent linear view corridor identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed stadium design is appropriate for its setting with several elements that reference the formal architecture of buildings in the Monumental Core, and a roof form that responds to the importance of the East Capitol Street view corridor by lowering the height along the east-west axis. As requested by the Commission, the applicant provided a rendering confirming the stadium roof will maintain the view of the U.S. Capitol Building dome and Washington Monument along the East Capitol Street axis from the Anacostia Hills escarpment of the topographic bowl.

The Commission requested additional information about the stadium height and conformance with the Height Act. The 1910 Height of Buildings Act sets building height limits in the District and permits the stadium to be constructed to a height of 130 feet with a dome to extend above that height. The proposed full stadium height including the roof dome is 195 feet from the measuring point at the level of the sidewalk opposite the middle of the front of the west entry to the stadium. The District of Columbia Zoning Administrator confirmed the proposed stadium complies with the Height Act and issued a formal determination on December 31, 2025. The determination letter is attached to this report, along with explanatory diagrams from the design team.

The monumental scale of the stadium is appropriate for its location and use; however, the scale should also be mediated by strategies to create a welcoming place for visitors and community members. At concept review the Commission requested additional information on the proposed building program at street level and how these spaces will be designed to help activate the public realm. The applicant notes the building program at the street level is continuing to evolve and may include a flagship retail team store, a museum, and food and beverage opportunities for year-round use. These uses are primarily shown to be located within the stadium podium at the west and east entries to the stadium and the podium provides a human-scale element. On the north and south entries, the podium lowers to the ground, and the full height of the colonnades can be experienced. These colonnades are intended to open the stadium to the community but may also have an imposing character. Staff recommends the **Commission encourage the applicant to continue to refine the north and south entries, which open to the surrounding neighborhoods, to ensure they are inviting and appropriately-scaled within the context of the monumental design.**

At concept plan review the Commission also requested further information regarding the proposed column spacing and recommended further refinements to the design to reflect historical precedents. In reference to classical fluted columns, eight flutes are articulated at the base of each of the stadium's columns blending into a solid roof support symbolizing the eight Wards of the District united into one. The proposed column spacing is required structurally to support the stadium roof, with the primary structural grid of concrete ribs spaced every 52 feet on center and the intermediate secondary structural grid every 26 feet on center.

Regarding lighting, graphics, and digital signage, the Comprehensive Plan discusses the need to balance the District's commercial and civic presence in and around the monumental core. The Commission recommended that as the stadium design is developed, the applicant study exterior

graphics and lighting approaches that respect the hierarchy of memorials, monuments, and important civic buildings and spaces in the nation's capital, with the U.S. Capitol and Washington Monument the most prominent features in the nighttime skyline. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant submit the following additional information regarding lighting and exterior graphics with the final submission to confirm alignment with Comprehensive Plan policies:**

- **Proposed exterior lighting levels in comparison to the U.S. Capitol Building and Washington Monument to ensure these structures remain the most prominent features in the nighttime skyline as outlined in Comprehensive Plan policy UD.B.1.5.**
- **The type, locations, size, and design of planned stadium exterior graphics such as significant signage, display screens, and projections, if proposed. The design should aim to balance entertainment needs with the public realm's overall visual character and not detract from other sites of civic importance as outlined in Comprehensive Plan policy UD.B.3.11.**

Site Design

The preliminary submission responds to several site design recommendations by the Commission. The festival plaza, west entry, and east plaza have a balanced and nearly symmetrical design that integrates elements such as an allée of trees, grand stairways, and an elevated landscaped podium to emphasize the axial relationships along the East Capitol Street view corridor and reference the formal landscapes of the Monumental Core. In order to enhance the experience of the series of vegetated plazas at the north, south, and east entries to the stadium, the landscape design also introduces wide planted areas to buffer from the adjacent high-traffic roadways. Moreover, the general planting palette includes species native to the region and select species supportive of pollinators in accordance with policies in the Federal Environment Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The preliminary submission includes additional information regarding tree preservation and replacement. According to the applicant most of the existing trees on site are in poor or declining condition, and these compromised trees will be removed with the exception of the allée of healthy trees west of the stadium in the festival plaza and north of the stadium along C Street, NE. The applicant plans to meet the District's project requirements regarding tree preservation and replacement and to generally conform with the intent of policies in the Comprehensive Plan Federal Element. The project will protect remaining trees and replace trees that are required to be removed with primarily native or well-adapted species on site where feasible. Two large elm trees, which are Heritage Trees, will be carefully preserved and relocated within the Festival Plaza.

As noted at the Commission meeting, loading and service areas often create a utilitarian side to urban buildings which would be difficult to disguise in a prominent stadium that is highly visible from all angles. The proposal aims to address this issue by locating the primary loading dock ingress and egress through a north tunnel under the stadium grounds, avoiding service entry impacts to the design of the stadium building. However, to also prevent visual impacts of the tunnel entry on the experience of the stadium landscape, staff recommends the **Commission recommend**

screening the loading tunnel entry from pedestrian pathways and seating areas with vegetation.

The submission provides an overview of the stormwater management approach and perimeter security strategy, though the applicant notes the design of individual kiosks and pavilions is still being studied. The design team plans to meet District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) stormwater management requirements by using a combination of green roofs, landscaped bioretention areas, permeable pavement, rainwater-harvesting cisterns, and added tree canopy. The perimeter security strategy is designed to provide controlled access during large events while maintaining a welcoming and navigable public realm. Perimeter security will include temporary event day elements for crowd control including retractable bollards and fencing. Permanent vehicle barriers and pedestrian security barriers are intended to be more integrated into the landscape and site elements. To assess the impact of these elements on the public realm, staff recommends the **Commission request additional siting information and design details in the final submission for the following:**

- **Planned stormwater facilities on the stadium site that will be visible to the public;**
- **Permanent kiosks and pavilions proposed around the stadium grounds; and**
- **Permanent perimeter security elements such as bollards and barriers.**

Staff also recommends **the Commission recommend that as the design of permanent perimeter security elements are developed their form and materials should respond to the architectural and landscape context in which they are located and complement and aesthetically enhance the character of the stadium grounds as guided by Urban Design Element policy UD.C.3.8.**

Circulation and Parking

The project's transportation principles from opening day are to minimize the space occupied by stadium parking; right-size transportation infrastructure to maintain human scale; prioritize modes that work best on both game days and non-game days; reuse transportation infrastructure that worked well in the past; and be a good transportation neighbor. The existing curvilinear high speed roadway network will be replaced with an urban grid of two-way streets, and all roadways will have, to the greatest extent possible, District Department of Transportation (DDOT) standard sidewalks with buffer/planter zones to improve pedestrian connectivity.

The Commission requested further information regarding planned multimodal transportation projects that will be in place at the time of the stadium opening, as well as proposed strategies to encourage mode shift to minimize stadium traffic impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. The existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure surrounding the stadium will be improved and expanded to encourage active modes. Public transportation improvements planned include: an improved walking route to and from the southern portal of the Stadium-Armory Metrorail Station; the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is studying alternatives to increase capacity at the Stadium-Armory Metrorail Station; and WMATA and DDOT are studying alternatives for enhanced bus service or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with a bus stop or BRT station along Benning Road. The applicant notes the site plan does not preclude a second Metrorail station if provided by WMATA in the future, though the plan is not dependent on this second station to manage capacity. Active TDM measures are also being explored to encourage staggered arrivals

and departures and use of alternative modes of transportation. Based on these efforts, staff recommends the **Commission support the project's emphasis on multimodal access to the stadium including Metrorail, Metrobus, and upgraded pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, that will be encouraged through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures.**

The overall parking strategy and information on the design of proposed parking garages G1 and G2 were requested by the Commission at concept review. On opening day, the split between structured and surface parking spaces will be approximately 75% structured and 25% surface and the total number of parking spaces will not exceed 8,000. Additional structured parking may be incorporated as part of the campus redevelopment, if needed, as the surface parking lots are removed. The submission notes that the planned maximum height for parking garages G1 and G2 is 110 feet to provide the necessary number of parking spaces required for stadium opening. The garages are outside the stadium site under current Commission review; however, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant evaluate the following as part of any future parking garage submissions:**

- **Alternative orientations for the G1 and G2 garages to reduce visual impacts of views to the stadium and from adjacent neighborhoods while continuing to be in proximity to the pedestrian tunnels and highway access; and**
- **Lower garage heights, particularly for the G2 garage near the Kingman Park neighborhood, and/or phasing of garage upper floors as surrounding surface lots are developed; and**
- **Active uses lining the ground floors of the garages to improve the pedestrian experience and create opportunities for community serving uses, as these will be the only adjacent development in early phases.**

The Commission requested a traffic study to understand the stadium's potential impacts to the surrounding street network. The applicant noted traffic analysis for the stadium and surrounding redevelopment will be conducted as part of the Master Plan's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the transportation analysis from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the RFK Campus Master Plan be included with any future parking garage submissions to NCPC to identify any potential impacts resulting from the garages' locations and capacity.**

The Comprehensive Plan Visitors and Commemoration Element encourages projects to ensure accessibility to visitor attractions for all users through well-designed and coordinated signage, pathways, parkways, streetscaping, wayfinding tools, and programming (policies VC.A.1 and VC.B.8). As such, staff continues to recommend the **Commission request the applicant provide the universally accessible circulation routes throughout the site and to the stadium podium, and the wayfinding and signage approach throughout the site for visitors with the final submission.**

Coordination

The applicant began community and stakeholder engagement in early 2025 and this engagement continues with the development of the stadium design and overall RFK Campus Master Plan. In particular, coordination with federal stakeholders including NPS and the DC National Guard Armory is ongoing.

With regard to programming, the Commanders are targeting over two hundred events for each calendar year; the outdoor plazas are envisioned as activation opportunities year-round for community-focused events; tailgating will occur throughout the RFK Campus on the surface parking lots as well as the festival plaza and will migrate to the top levels of the parking decks as new buildings are constructed on the surface parking lots; and acoustics are being studied closely to tune the transparent roof, exterior glass, and audio systems to limit noise impacts to the neighborhood. While these activation strategies are encouraged by the Comprehensive Plan, aims to create a lively destination should be balanced with consideration for any potential impacts on the surrounding community. As the stadium project is developed, staff recommends the **Commission recommend continued analysis and mitigation of potential event noise and nuisance impacts on surrounding neighbors.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The project is generally consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. Staff have considered policies set forth in the Urban Design, Transportation, Visitors and Commemoration, and Parks and Open Space Elements, among others as highlighted throughout this report.

National Historic Preservation Act

Under the National Capital Planning Act, NCPC has advisory authority for District projects outside the Central Area and therefore does not have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

National Environmental Policy Act

Under the National Capital Planning Act, NCPC has advisory authority for District projects outside the Central Area and therefore does not have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

On March 11, 2026 the Coordinating Committee forwarded the proposed preliminary site and building plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal was coordinated with all participating agencies. District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) coordination is ongoing. The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) noted that the project is on its March meeting agenda. The participating agencies included NCPC, CFA, the National Park Service, DOEE, the District Office of Planning, The DC State Historic Preservation Office, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the General Services Administration, and the District Department of Transportation.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed the stadium concept at its March 19, 2026 meeting and provided comments but did not take an action.

ONLINE REFERENCE

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

- Submission Package

Prepared by Laura Shipman
03/26/2026

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

National Capital Planning Commission

New Stadium at RFK Campus

2400 E Capitol St NE, Washington, DC

Approval of Preliminary Site and Building Plans

Office of the Mayor of the District of Columbia,
RFK Stadium Project Management Office

April 2, 2026 | File: 8721

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: February 5, 2026

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

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary Site and Building Plans

Session: Staff Presentation

NCPC Review Officer: Laura Shipman

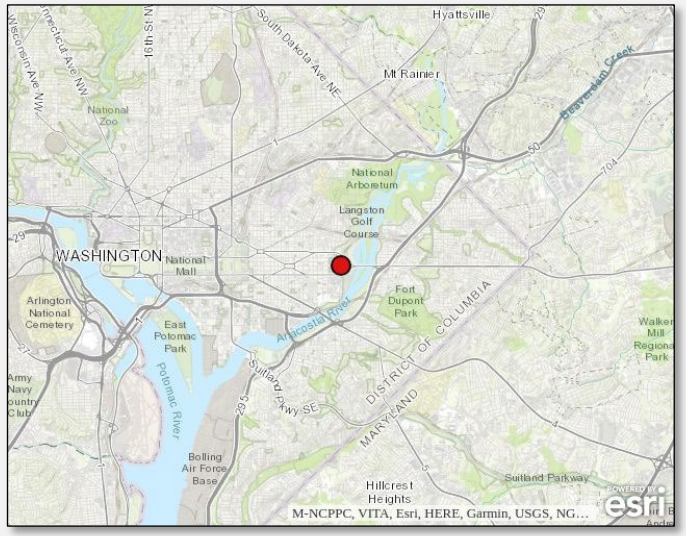
NCPC File Number: 8721

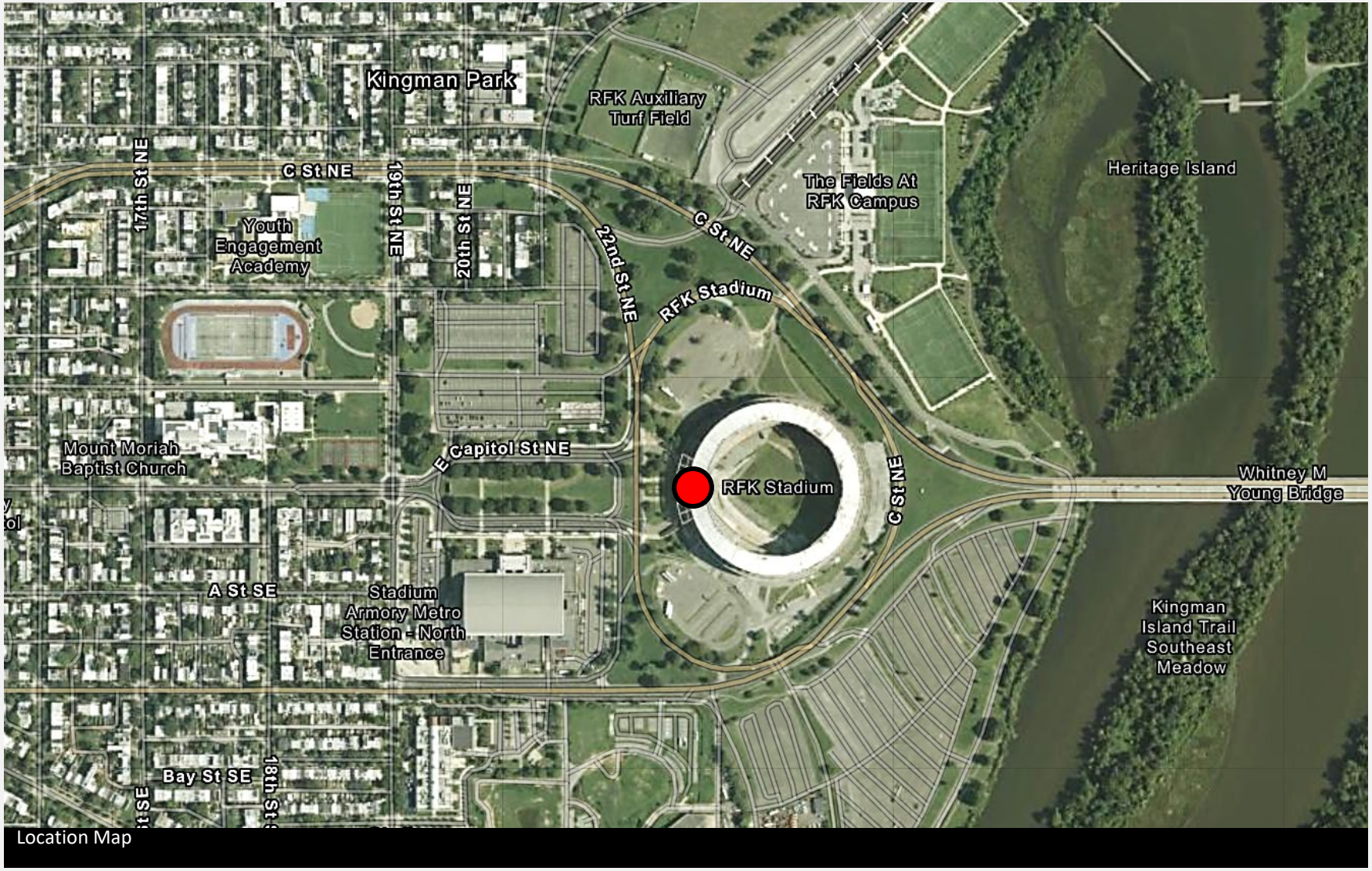
Project Summary:

The District of Columbia's Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Stadium Project Management Office, in partnership with the Washington Commanders, has submitted preliminary site and building plans for a proposed new stadium and surrounding site improvements on the RFK Stadium Campus located in Washington, DC. The stadium will replace the original RFK stadium, which officially closed to the public in 2019. Demolition began in late January 2025 and is anticipated to be complete in mid-2026. The stadium will be located within the larger RFK Campus, which is an approximately 180-acre parcel between the Anacostia River and the adjacent Kingman Park and Hill East neighborhoods. In January 2025 the D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act allowed the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the RFK Campus from the National Park Service (NPS) to the District. The broader RFK Campus mixed-use redevelopment will be guided by a District-led Master Plan, which will be prepared by the DC Office of Planning (DCOP).

The stadium project site is approximately 30 acres within the overall RFK Campus and is generally bounded to the northeast by C Street, NE, to the southeast by Independence Avenue, SE, and to the west by 22nd Street, NE and SE. The site is positioned on axis with the East Capitol Street corridor. The applicant envisions the new roofed stadium for the Washington Commanders NFL Football Team serving as a venue for sports, arts, and cultural events, creating a year-round activity and entertainment center for District residents and visitors. The stadium will have 65,000 seats along with space for 5,000 people standing. Construction is anticipated to be complete in 2030.

Site Location

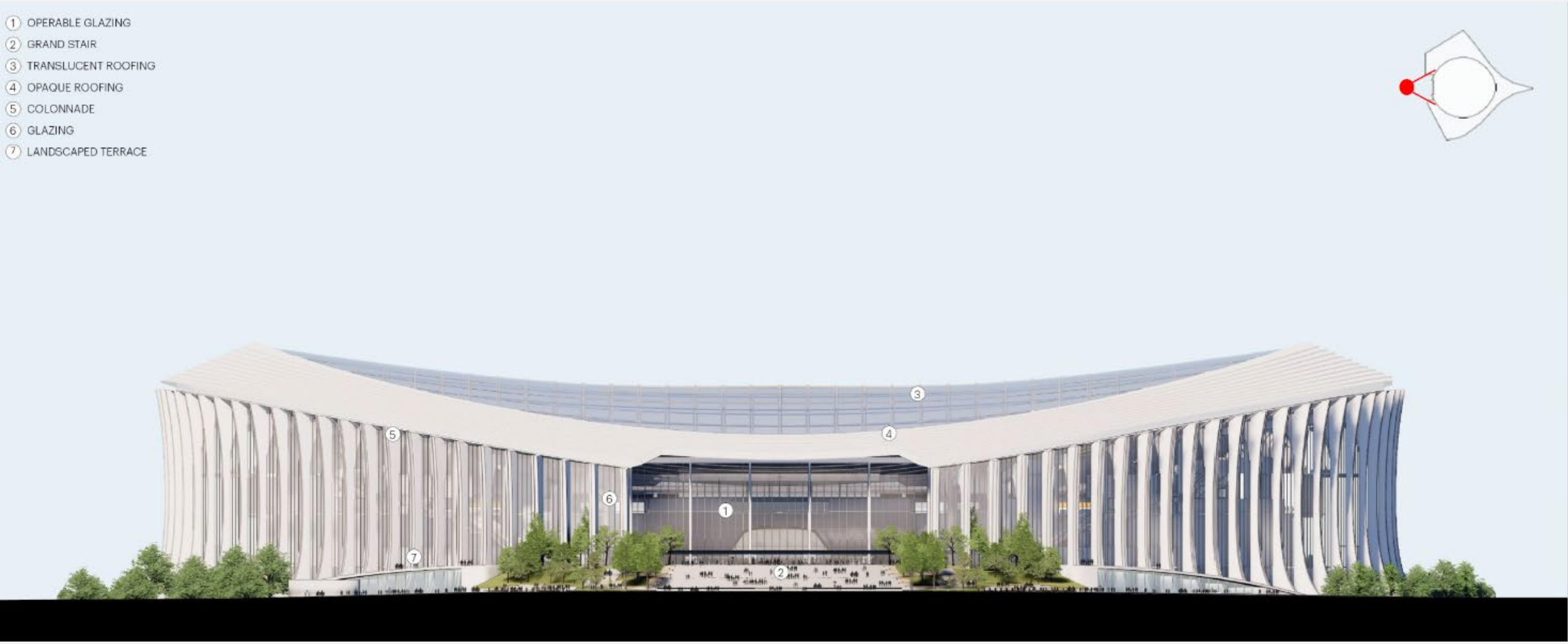




Location Map

Site Plan

Previous West Elevation (Concept Feb 2026)

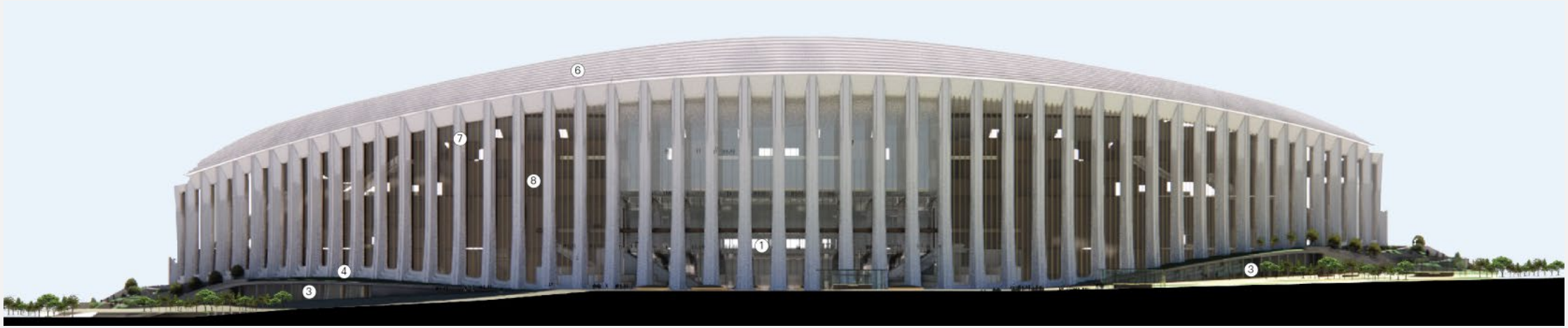


West Elevation

East Elevation

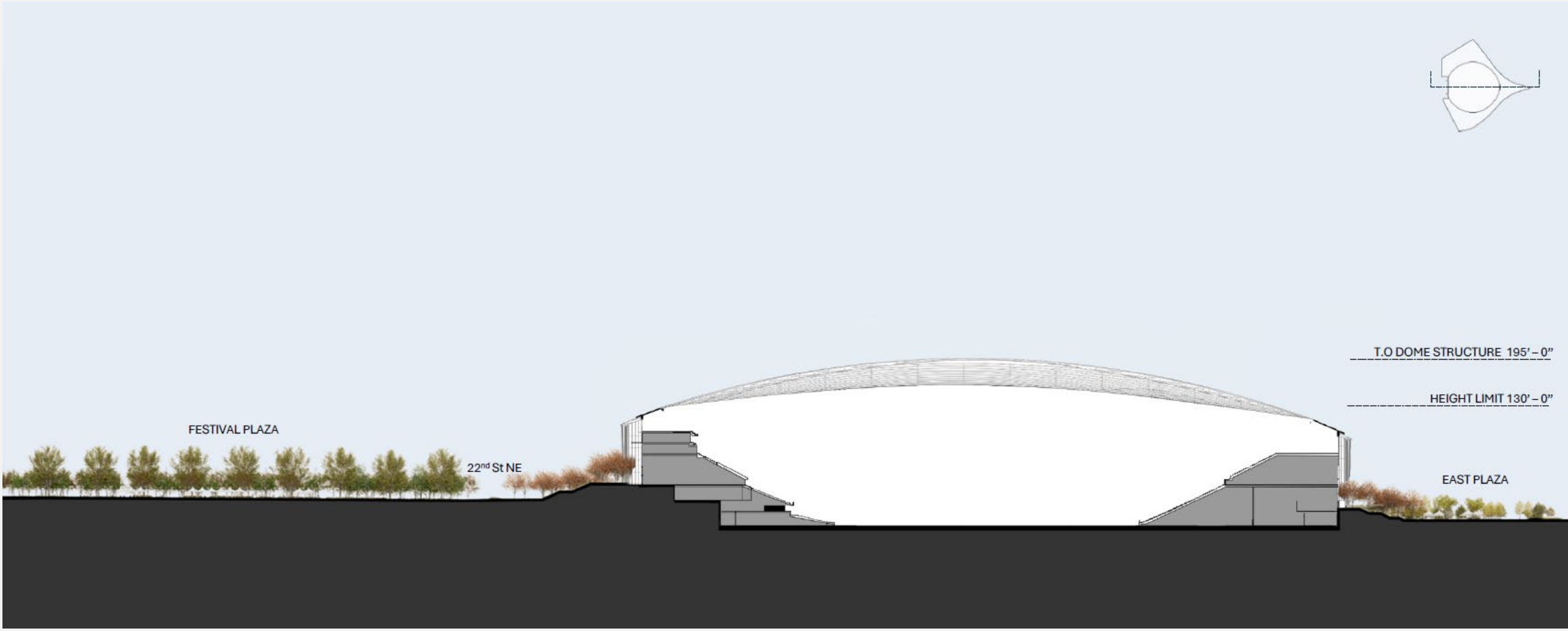
North and South Elevations

North Elevation

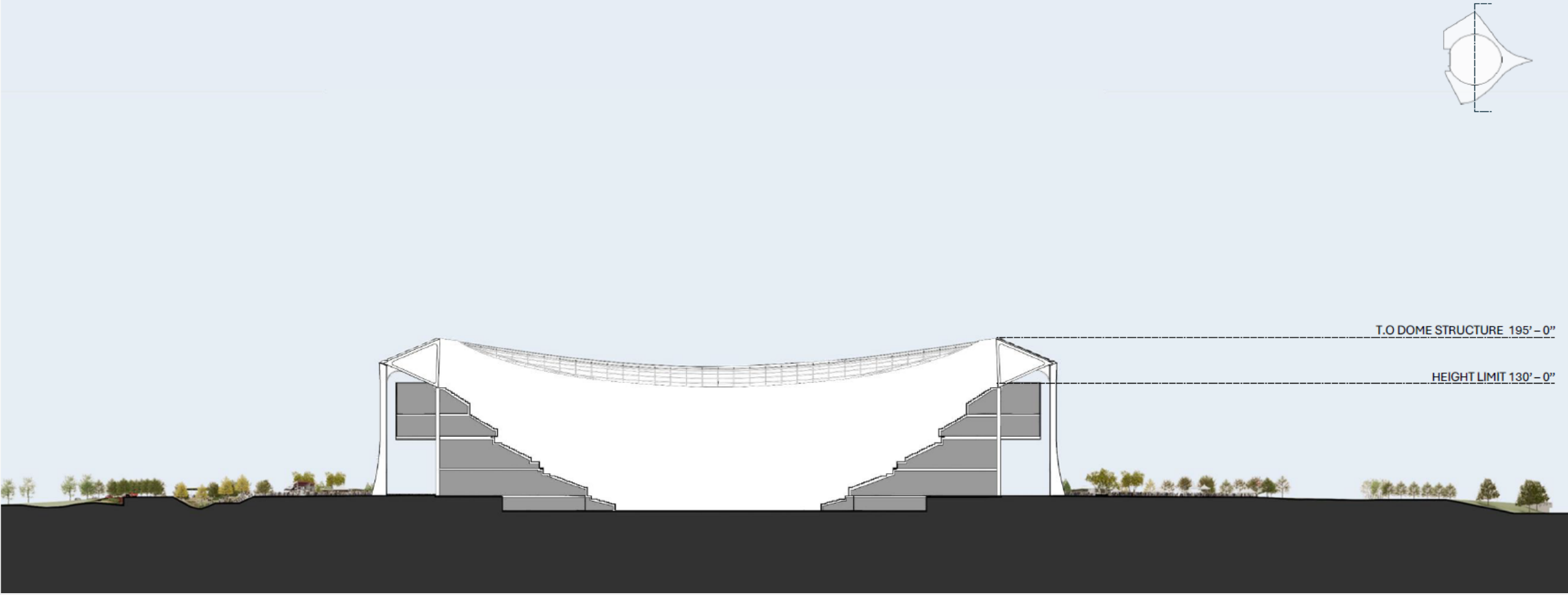


South Elevation

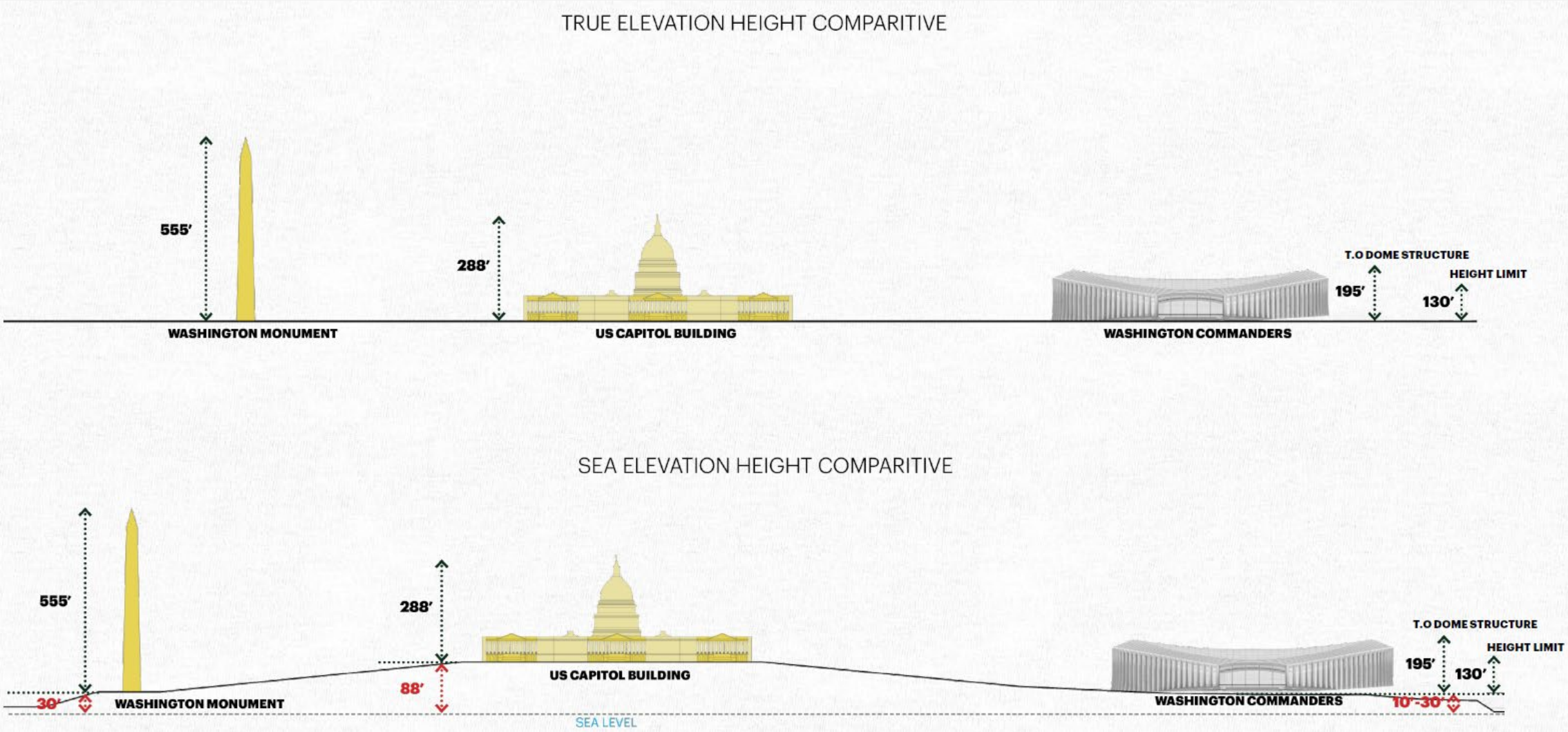
East-West Section



North-South Section



Elevations and Height Comparison



Northwest Axonometric

Former Stadium View from West

Proposed View from West

Proposed View from Northwest

Former Stadium View from Anacostia River

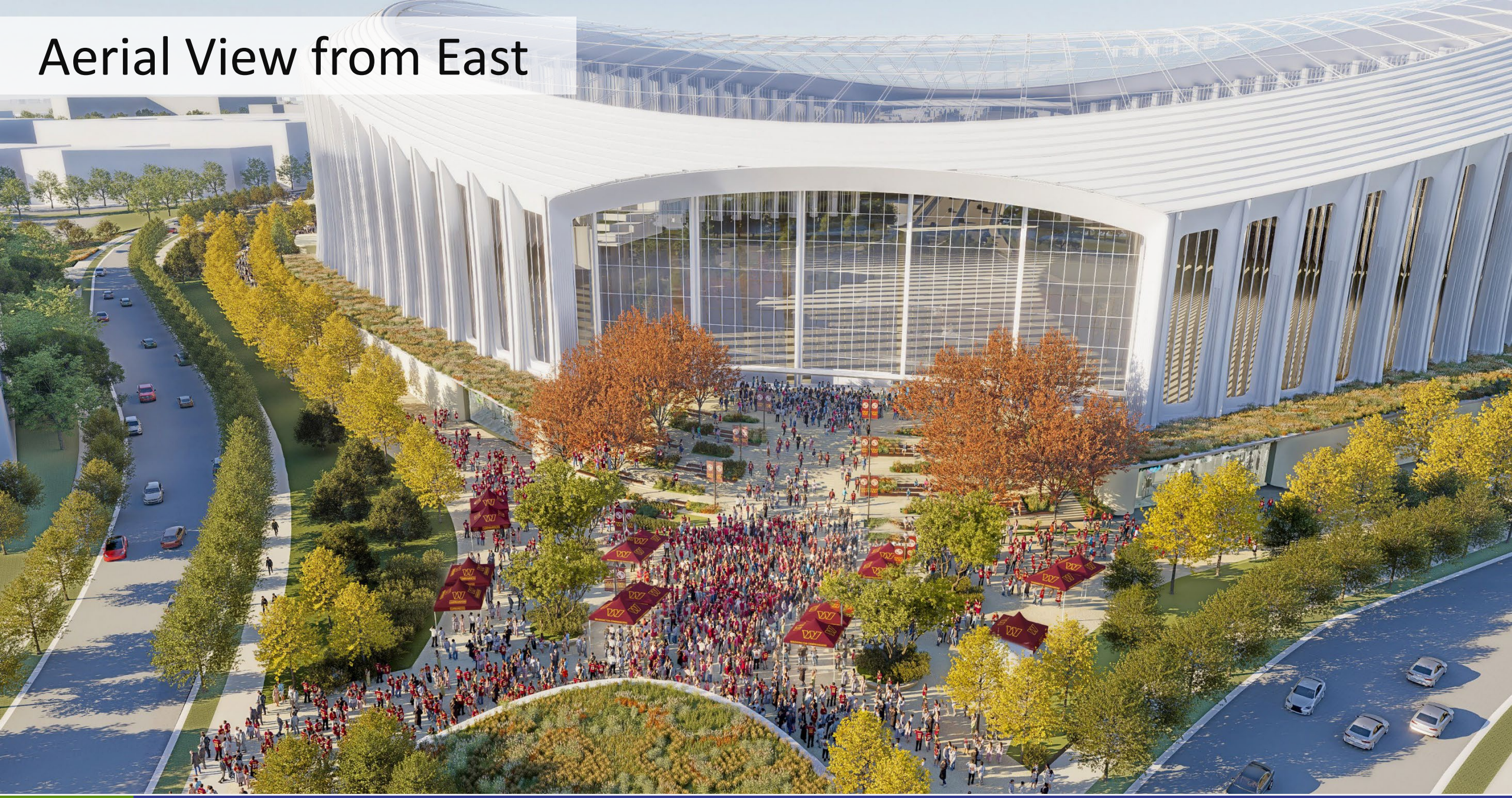
Proposed View from Anacostia River

Former Stadium View from East

View Along East Capitol Street From 40th Street NE

View from Whitney Young Memorial Bridge

Aerial View from East



Proposed View from Hill East Neighborhood

Pedestrian Arrival Game Day: Festival Plaza

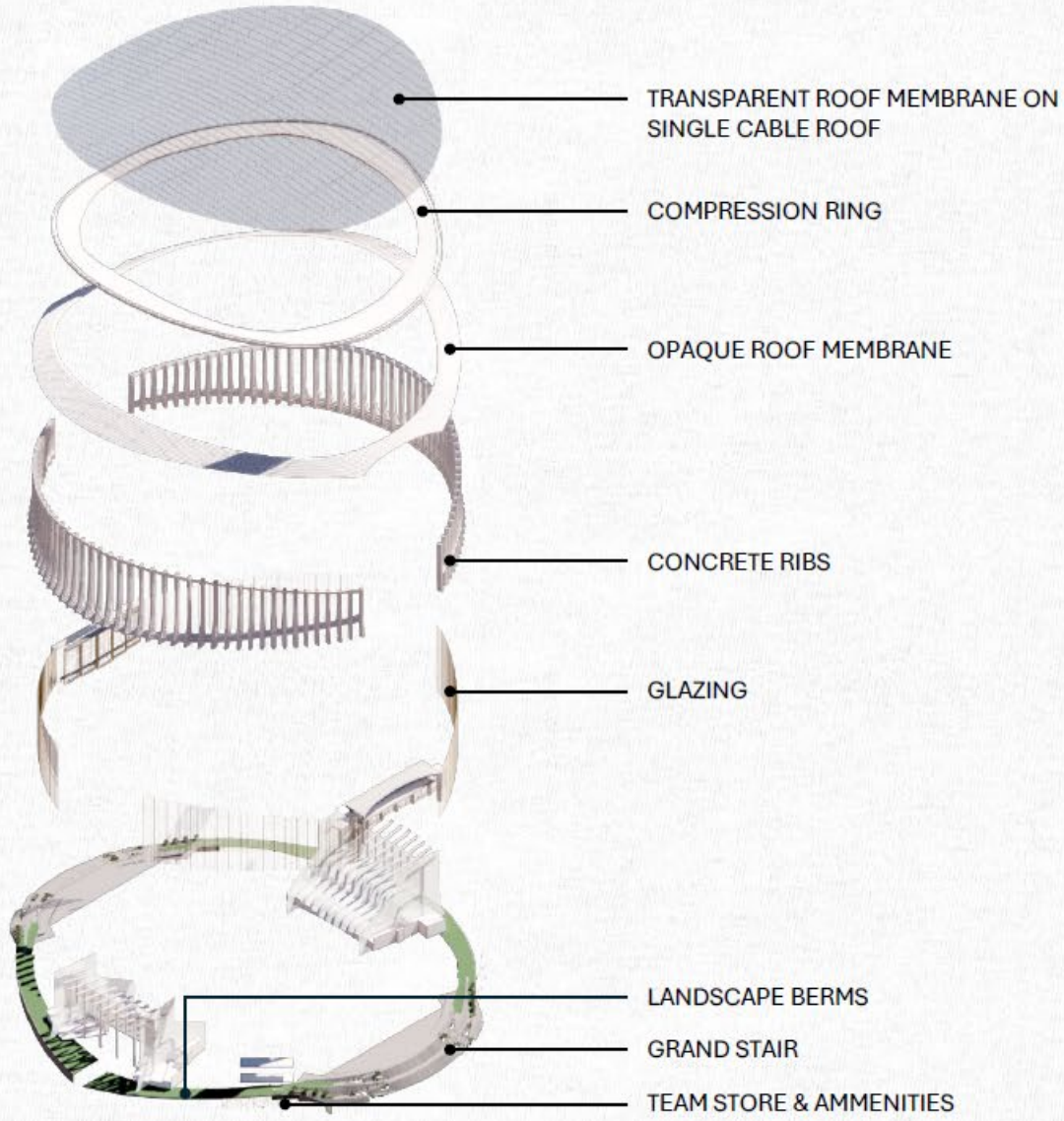
Pedestrian Arrival Game Day: North Pedestrian Tunnel

Pedestrian Arrival Game Day: West of the Stadium

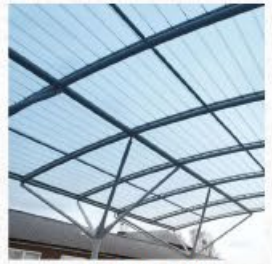
Festival Plaza

East Plaza

Materials




TRANSPARENT ROOF MEMBRANE


SINGLE CABLE ROOF


VIDEO BOARD


TRANSITIONAL COLONNADE


BUILT-UP STEEL STRUCTURE

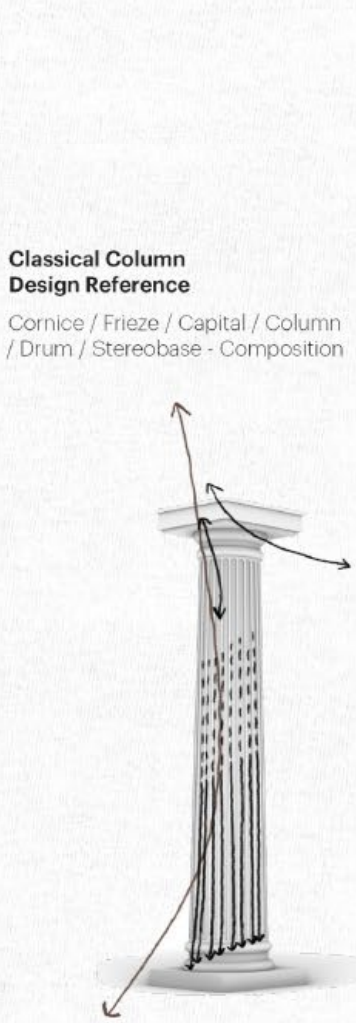

C.I.P. CONCRETE STRUCTURE


ENTRANCE GLAZING

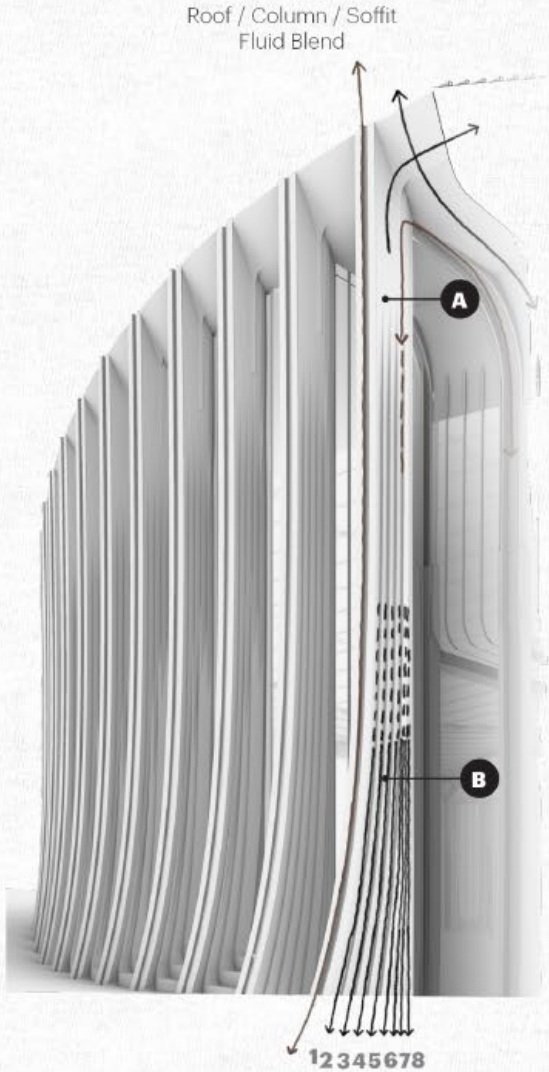

LANDSCAPE TERRACE


GLAZING

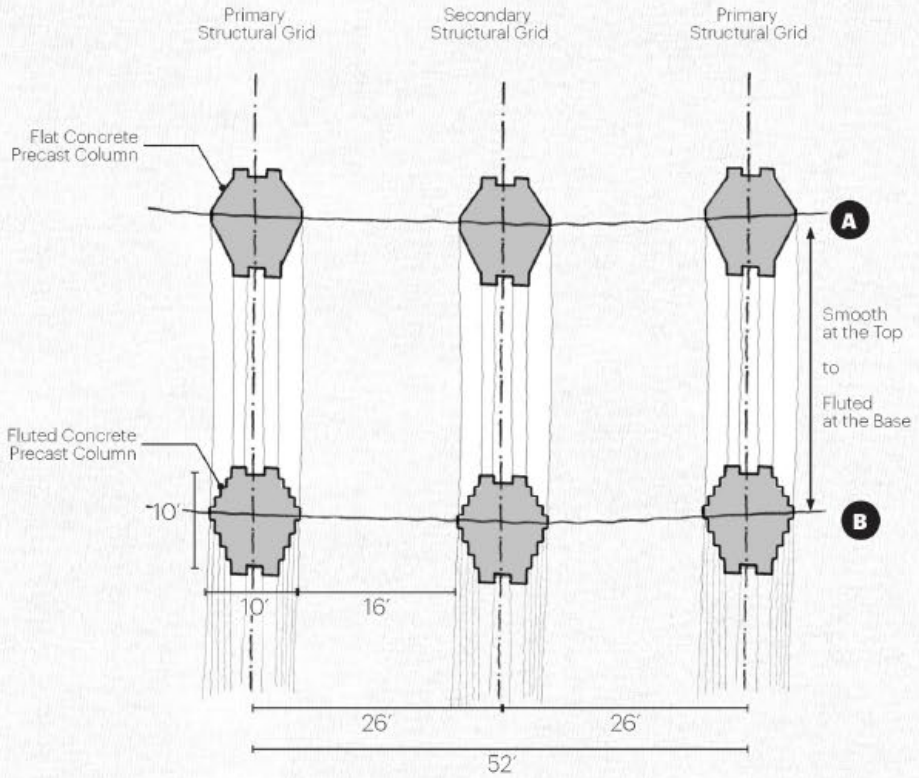
Column Details and Spacing



Classical fluted column
articulation



8 flutes blended into ONE
8 Wards of DC, united into ONE



Lighting

The overall lighting approach is to develop a simple, minimized vocabulary of lighting elements that can be carefully woven into the architectural design of the stadium. The building lighting and the site lighting will work in tandem, to blur the lines between interior and exterior spaces while creating a softly glowing, 'lantern-like' appearance that anchors the stadium within an important gateway to the District using efficient and appropriately dimmed lighting sources.

On game or event days, the use of automated controls and a layered lighting design approach will bring the building alive, communicating the energy within the stadium to the fan arrival experience. Careful consideration will be given to minimizing light pollution, light trespass, and the impact on the surrounding wildlife habitat. Around the Stadium Site, the lighting approach will prioritize wayfinding, comfort, and safety, while creating a pleasant nighttime atmosphere. Spill light from the sports lighting and interior ambient lighting will be greatly reduced by utilizing a low transmission, fabric roof membrane. Light sources will be selected, controlled, and carefully located to reduce glare.

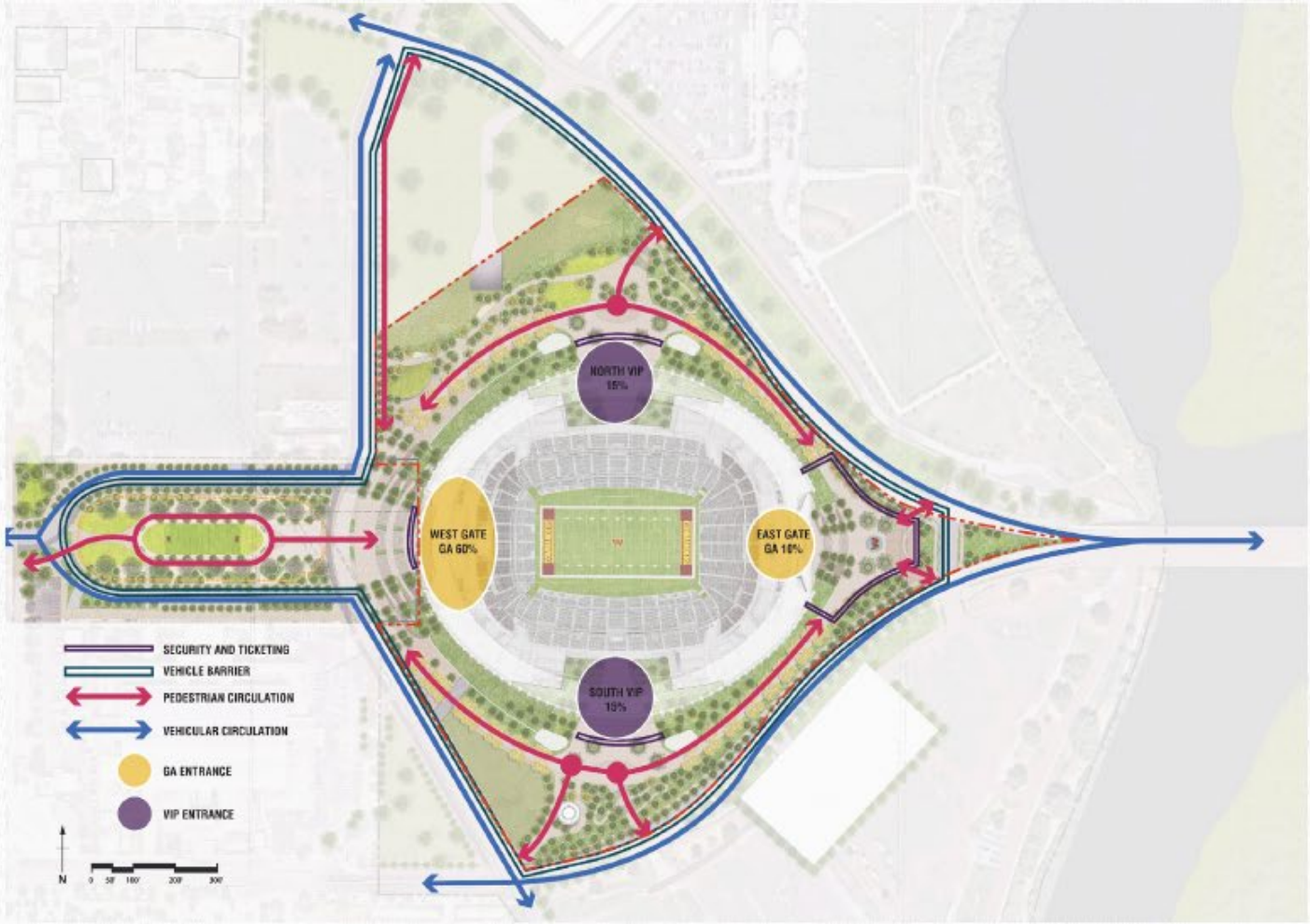
The design approach is to balance an innovative stadium design with a unique visual experience and respect for the context of the overall RFK Campus and beyond. The proposed structure includes several elements that reference the formal architecture of buildings in the monumental core, including the surrounding colonnade, elevated podium, and grand stairways. These architectural features will be appropriately celebrated after dark while respecting the hierarchy of the memorials, monuments, and the Capitol, on the DC skyline.

Perimeter Security

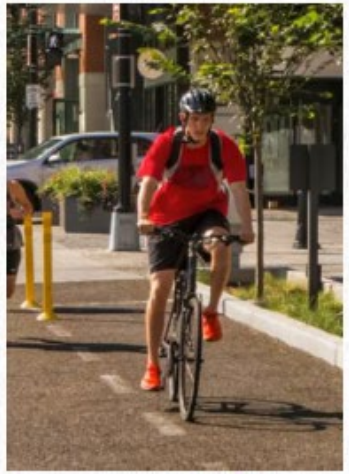
The perimeter security strategy is designed to provide controlled access during large events while maintaining a welcoming and navigable public realm. Select sections of the Stadium Site will be temporarily defined using retractable bollards, decorative fencing, and controlled entry points to manage crowd flow and meet safety requirements. These elements are positioned to clearly define secure zones while maintaining visual continuity and reinforcing the overall site organization.

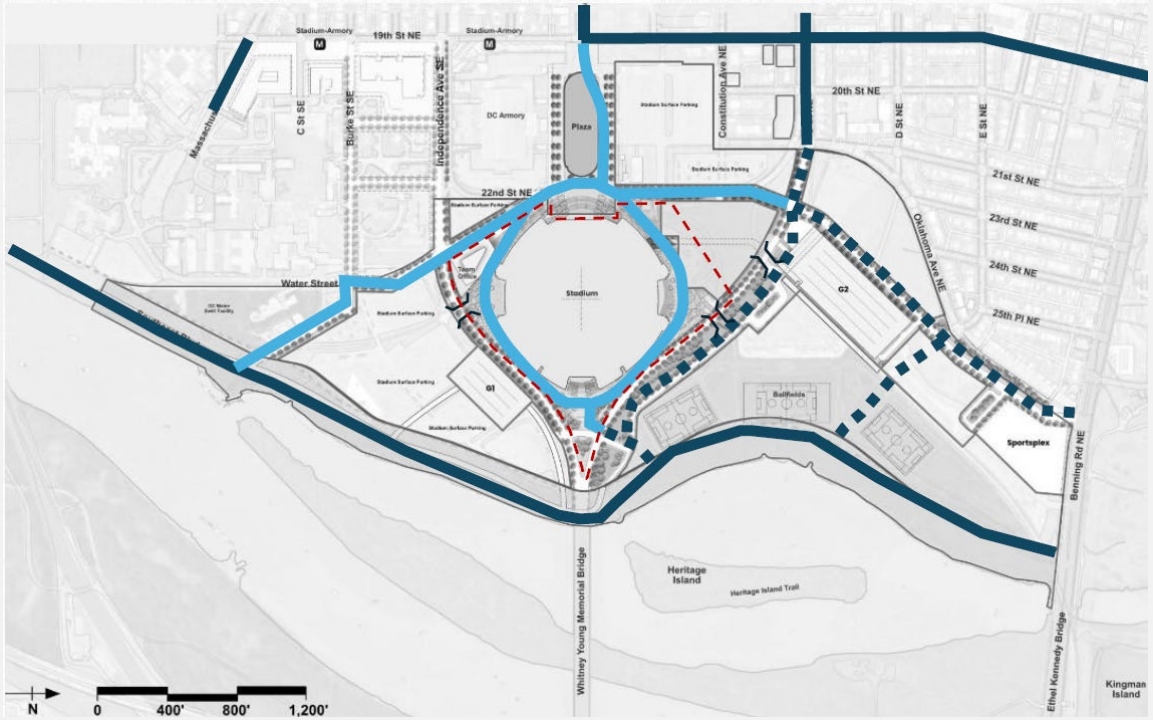
Outside of event conditions, the perimeter remains visually open and pedestrian-friendly, supporting everyday connectivity through the Stadium Site and along adjacent streets. This layered approach balances operational security needs with an accessible, walkable environment that prioritizes comfort, visibility, and safe movement for the broader community.

Coordination with the Metropolitan Police Department is underway and will continue going forward.



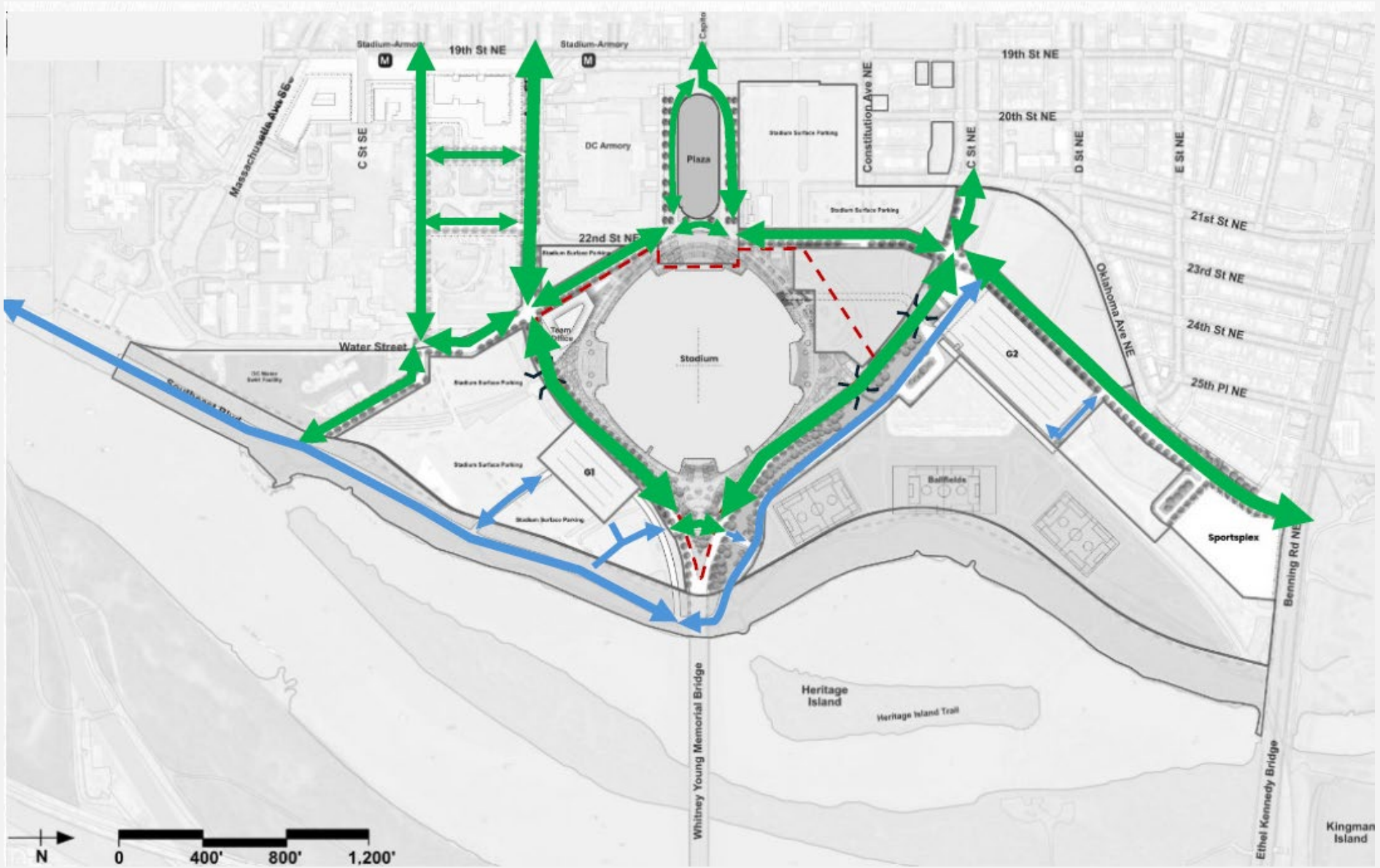
Multimodal Approach & Transportation Demand Management



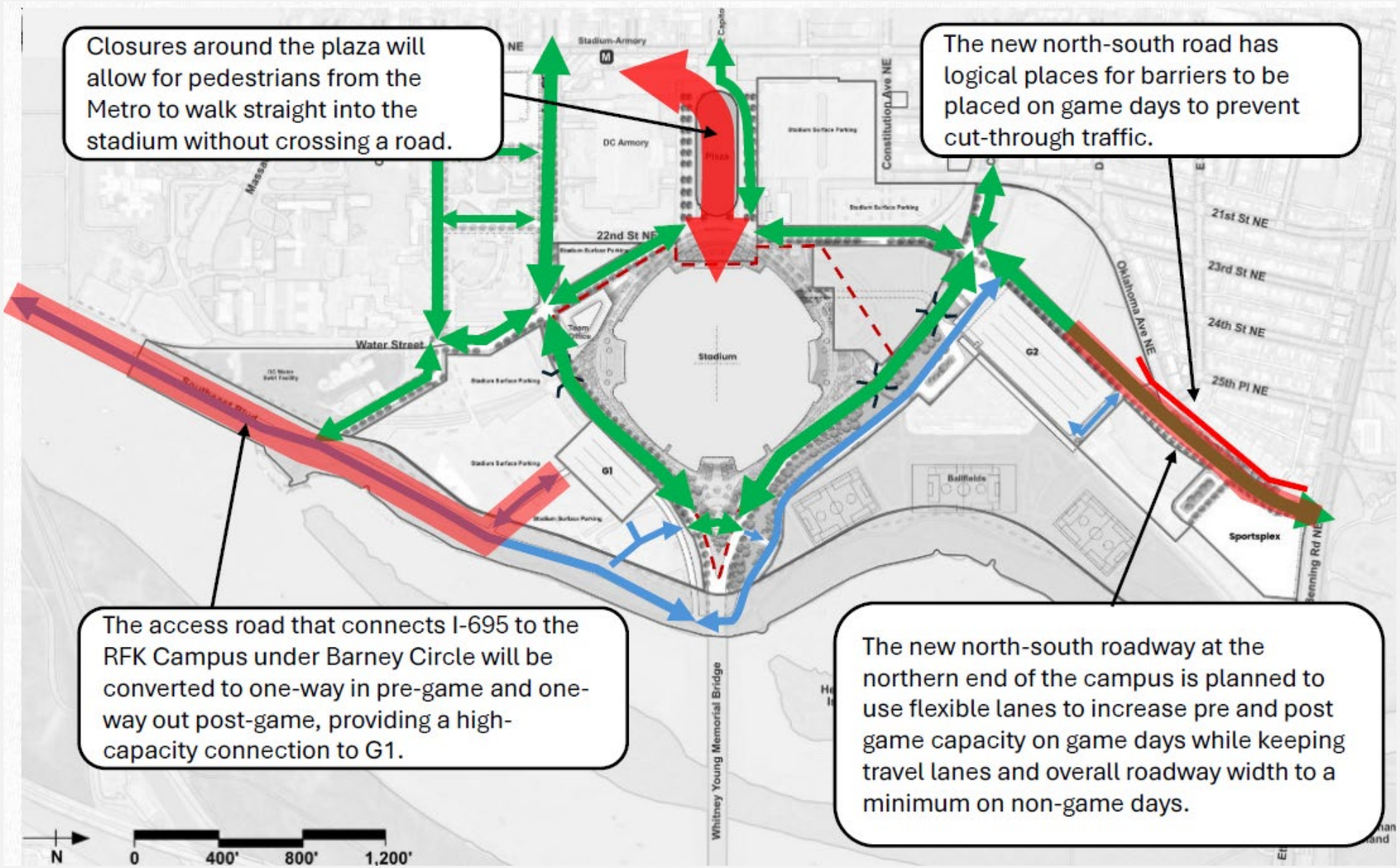


- Existing bicycle facilities
- Modified bicycle facilities
- New bicycle facilities

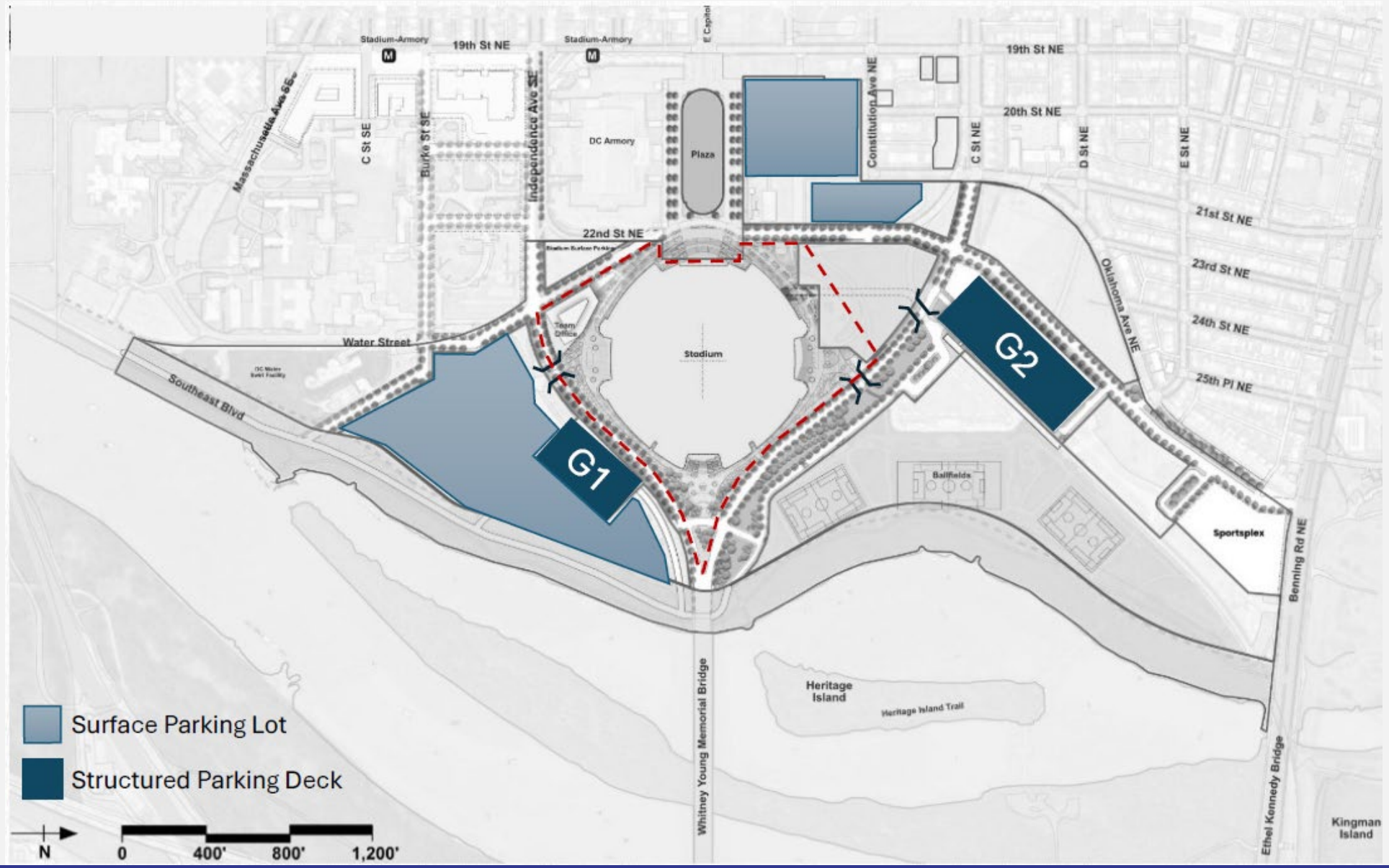
Day One Roads – Primary and Secondary



Game Day Special Operations



Day One Parking

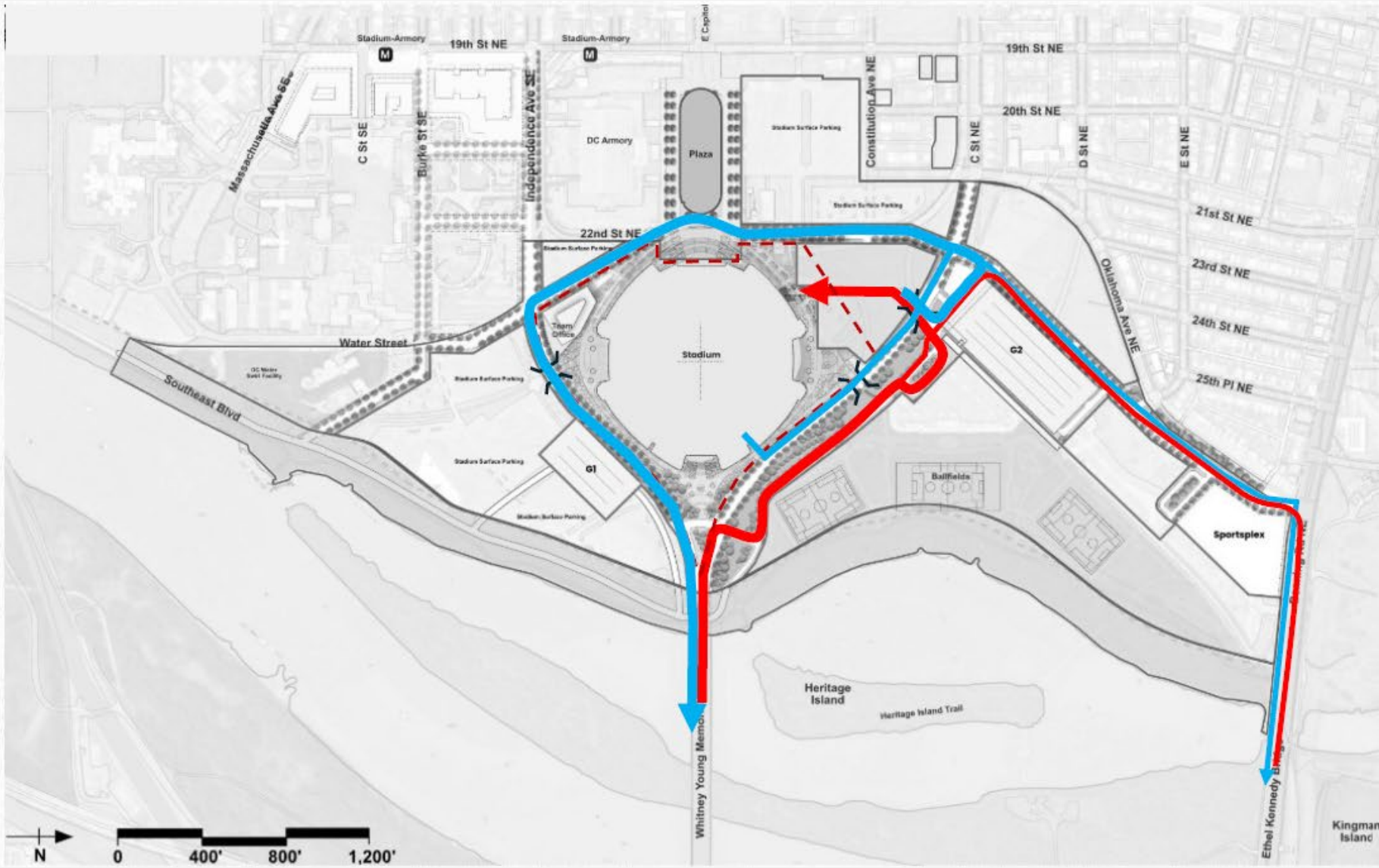


Loading and Deliveries

Loading access will be on the north side of the stadium, with primary access from DC-295 via the Whitney Young Memorial Bridge and secondary access from Benning Road. An inspection area is planned near G2 outside of the security perimeter, as required by the NFL. Large vehicle delivery and loading activity will be scheduled to occur outside of pre- and post-game activities.

Egress from the loading facilities will primarily be via the Whitney Young Memorial Bridge through a route designed to accommodate turning movements for large tractor trailers. Truck routing will be minimal on Benning Road.

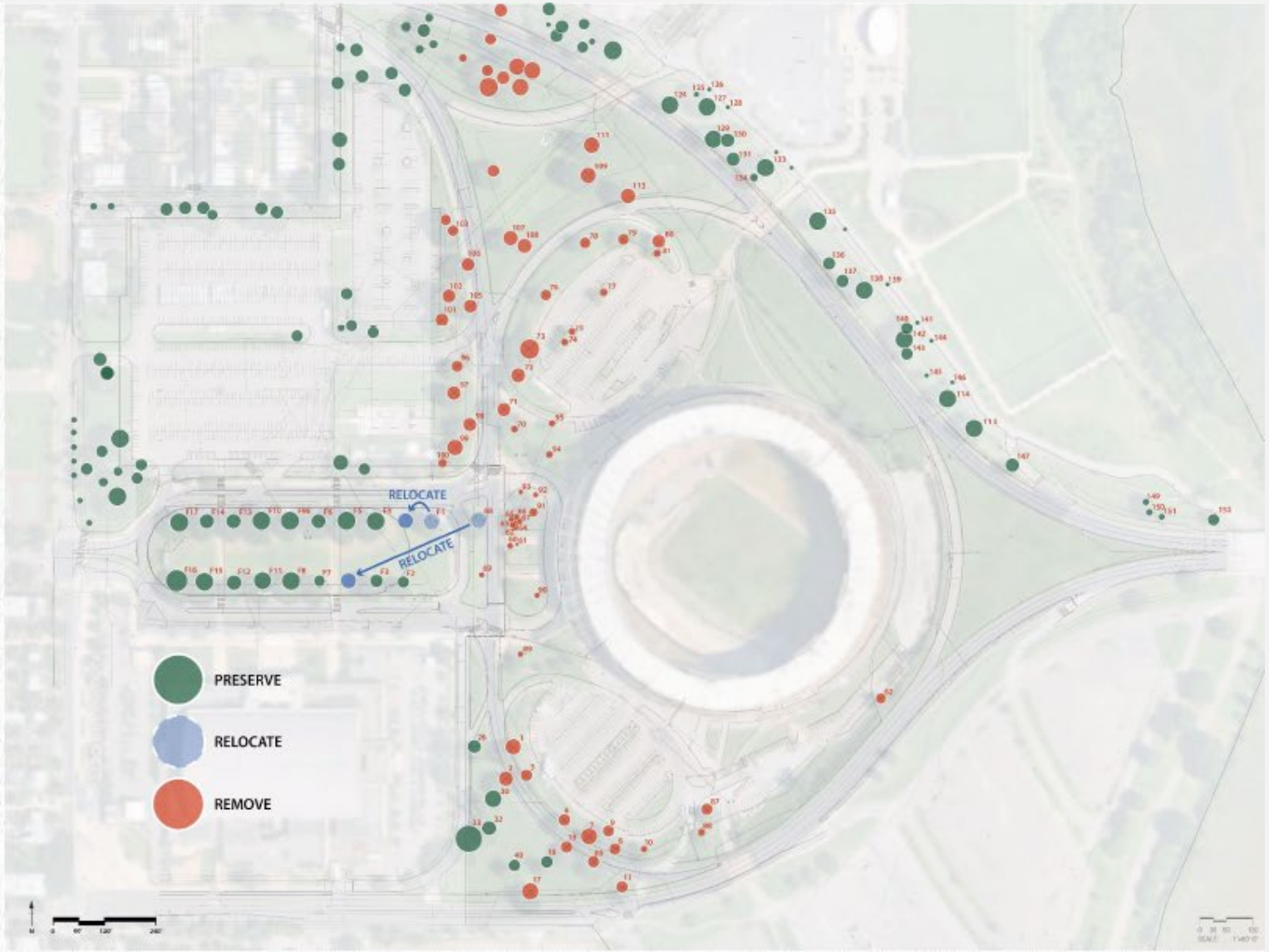
The loading dock entry has been visually minimized for Day One and will ultimately be underground once buildings around the stadium are constructed. The truck access route for loading utilizes the existing C Street underpass to create a path that is separated from other traffic modes.



Tree Preservation and Replacement

All trees identified to remain will be protected throughout construction with clearly marked protection fencing placed around the extent of their canopy or as directed by the project arborist. No equipment, storage, grading, or trenching will be allowed within these protected areas. If work must occur nearby, roots will be carefully exposed by hand or with low-impact methods to avoid unnecessary damage. In addition, two large elm trees, which are Heritage Trees, will be carefully preserved and relocated within the festival plaza, following best practices for root preparation, transport, replanting, and post-transplant care to support successful establishment.

Trees that must be removed due to grading, utilities, access, or safety needs will be replaced in accordance with project requirements and the intent of Section G of the Comprehensive Plan's Federal Environment Element. Replacement plantings will focus on native or well-adapted species that contribute to long-term canopy coverage and habitat value. If site constraints limit full replacement in a specific location, additional planting elsewhere on site or other approved mitigation measures will be used to ensure overall canopy and environmental goals are met.



Planting Palette: Trees (selection)

Quercus coccinea
Scarlet Oak
Native Species

Betula nigra
River Birch
Native Species

Nyssa sylvatica
Black Gum
Native Species

Liriodendron tulipifera
Tulip Tree
Native Species

Acer rubrum
Red Maple
Native Species

Taxodium distichum
Bald Cypress
Native Species

Liquidambar styraciflua
Sweet Gum
Native Species

Fagus grandifolia
American Beech
Native Species

Planting Palette: Understory and Grasses (selection)

Aronia arbutifolia 'Brilliantissima'
Brilliant Red Chokeberry
Native / Pollinator supportive

Clethra alnifolia 'Hummingbird'
Hummingbird Summersweet
Native / Pollinator supportive

Ceanothus americanus
New Jersey Tea
Native / Pollinator supportive

Cephalanthus occidentalis 'Sugar Shack'
Sugar Shack Buttonbush
Native / Pollinator supportive

Hydrangea arborescens 'Annabelle'
Annabelle Hydrangea
Native / Pollinator supportive

Ilex glabra 'Shamrock'
Shamrock Inkberry Holly
Native / Pollinator supportive

Abelia x grandiflora 'Little Richard'
Little Richard Glossy Abelia
Pollinator supportive

Juniperus horizontalis 'Plumosa'
Plumosa Creeping Juniper
Native

Ilex verticillata 'Red Sprite'
Red Sprite Winterberry
Native / Pollinator supportive

Rhus aromatica 'Gro-Low'
Gro-Low Fragrant Sumac
Native / Pollinator supportive

Vaccinium corymbosum 'Ivanhoe'
Ivanhoe Highbush Blueberry
Native / Pollinator supportive

Viburnum Dentatum 'Blue Muffin'
Blue Muffin Arrowwood Viburnum
Native / Pollinator supportive

Kalmia latifolia
Mountain Laurel
Native / Pollinator supportive

Morella cerifera 'Don's Dwarf'
Don's Dwarf Wax Myrtle
Native / Pollinator supportive

Viburnum obovatum 'Mrs Shillers Delight'
Mrs Schillers Delight Water's Viburnum
Native / Pollinator supportive

Lobelia cardinalis
Cardinal Flower
Native / Pollinator supportive

Schizachyrium scoparium
Little Bluestem
Native / Pollinator supportive

Panicum virgatum
Switchgrass
Native / Pollinator supportive

Sorghastrum nutans
Indian Grass
Native / Pollinator supportive

Sporobolus heterolepis
Prairie Dropseed
Native / Pollinator supportive

Chasmanthium latifolium
Northern Sea Oats
Native / Pollinator supportive

Eragrostis spectabilis
Purple Love Grass
Native

Deschampsia cespitosa
Tufted Hairgrass
Native / Pollinator supportive

Carex pensylvanica
Pennsylvania Sedge
Native

DC DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

December 31, 2025

Andy VanHorn
Head of Real Estate, Washington Commanders
4600 River Rd., Suite 400
Riverdale, MD 20737

Re: Determination Concerning the Compliance of the RFK Campus Stadium Height Act Concept Plans with the 1910 Height of Buildings Act

Dear Mr. VanHorn:

By letter dated September 4, 2025, I issued a determination regarding the permitted height of the RFK Campus stadium under the 1910 Height of Buildings Act (the "Height Act"). In that letter, I confirmed the following:

- The stadium can achieve a maximum building height of 130 feet based on East Capitol Street right-of-way width.

- The stadium's height will be measured from the Building Height Measuring Point ("BHMP") located at the level of the sidewalk opposite the middle of the front of the stadium on East Capitol Street.

- The Height Act allows a dome to be erected to a greater height than the maximum permitted building height. While the term "dome" is not defined in the Height Act, the Merriam-Webster definition of "dome" includes, among other things, "a roofed sports stadium." Accordingly, the stadium's dome is permitted to exceed the 130-foot building height limitation under the Height Act.

I have reviewed the attached Height Act Concept Plans prepared by HKS dated December 31, 2025 ("Plans") to confirm that the stadium's present conceptual design complies with the Height Act. My understanding is that pursuant to D.C. Law L26-0054 the stadium is not subject to zoning until after such time as a final certificate of occupancy is issued. Accordingly, this letter only evaluates the stadium's compliance with the Height Act.

The proposed conceptual stadium design includes (1) a traditional "seating bowl", which encompasses the field, stadium seating, and all other components of occupied space, surrounded by an exterior wall, all of which are at or below 130 feet, as labelled in gray, orange, and yellow on Page 5 of the Plans, and (2) a "dome structure", which is comprised of a shell, metal fascia, and structural ribs and which is permitted to exceed 130 feet, as labelled in blue on Pages 6-8 of the Plans.

The seating bowl will be surrounded by an exterior wall and is supported by a series of concrete columns. The columns rise to a height that corresponds to the height of the exterior wall at or below the 130-foot height limit. The exterior wall and its supporting columns are shown in yellow and orange on Page 5 of the Plans, and as depicted on that sheet, the exterior wall is recessed in some locations. The seating bowl, including all occupiable space, columns, and exterior wall, has a height of 130 feet or less in compliance with the Height Act.

Above and surrounding the seating bowl is the dome structure that extends above the height limit. The dome structure will be constructed of a series of concrete and steel ribs that support an opaque roof membrane shell that surrounds a transparent roof membrane shell over a free-spanning steel cable structure. This construction is consistent with how dome structures have historically been constructed and modern stadium dome designs. *See* Pages 1 through 3 of the Plans. In this case, the ribs are comprised of two materials: steel ribs are used to support the membrane shell above, and concrete ribs extend to the ground and are used to support the steel ribs and shell above. The shell is connected to the seating bowl's exterior wall through a metal panel fascia. All three components of the dome structure – namely, the shell, fascia, and ribs – are each an integral part of the overall dome structure. The dome structure rests on the concrete columns that support and are a part of the seating bowl, but only the dome structure is above the 130-foot height limit. The concrete columns upon which the dome structure is placed are all at or below 130 feet.

The dome will serve as the roof of the stadium. I have been advised that as a result, the dome will need to contain certain fixtures, such as lighting, air-handling ductwork, scaffolding, walkways, and/or catwalks. Consistent with past interpretations, the presence of such fixtures does not alter the structure's classification as a dome, and it does not render the volume of the dome habitable. In this case, all spaces that support human occupancy, including the seating bowl's exterior wall and structural columns upon which the dome structure is placed, will be at or below the 130-foot height limit. The only element that will extend above 130 feet is the dome structure, which is permitted by the Height Act (*see* D.C. Code § 6–601.05(h) "that such structures when above such limit of height shall be fireproof, and . . . no floor or compartment thereof shall be constructed or used for human occupancy above the top story of the building upon which such structures are placed.")

For the reasons stated above, I have determined that the current conceptual stadium design, as depicted on the attached Plans, complies with the Height Act. If plans for the stadium submitted with the building permit application are consistent with the Plans, then the plans will be considered compliant with the Height Act.

This determination is the Zoning Administrator's final determination regarding the compliance of the Plans with the Height Act.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Beeton

Kathleen A. Beeton, AICP
Zoning Administrator

HEIGHT ACT CONCEPT PLANS

RFK CAMPUS STADIUM

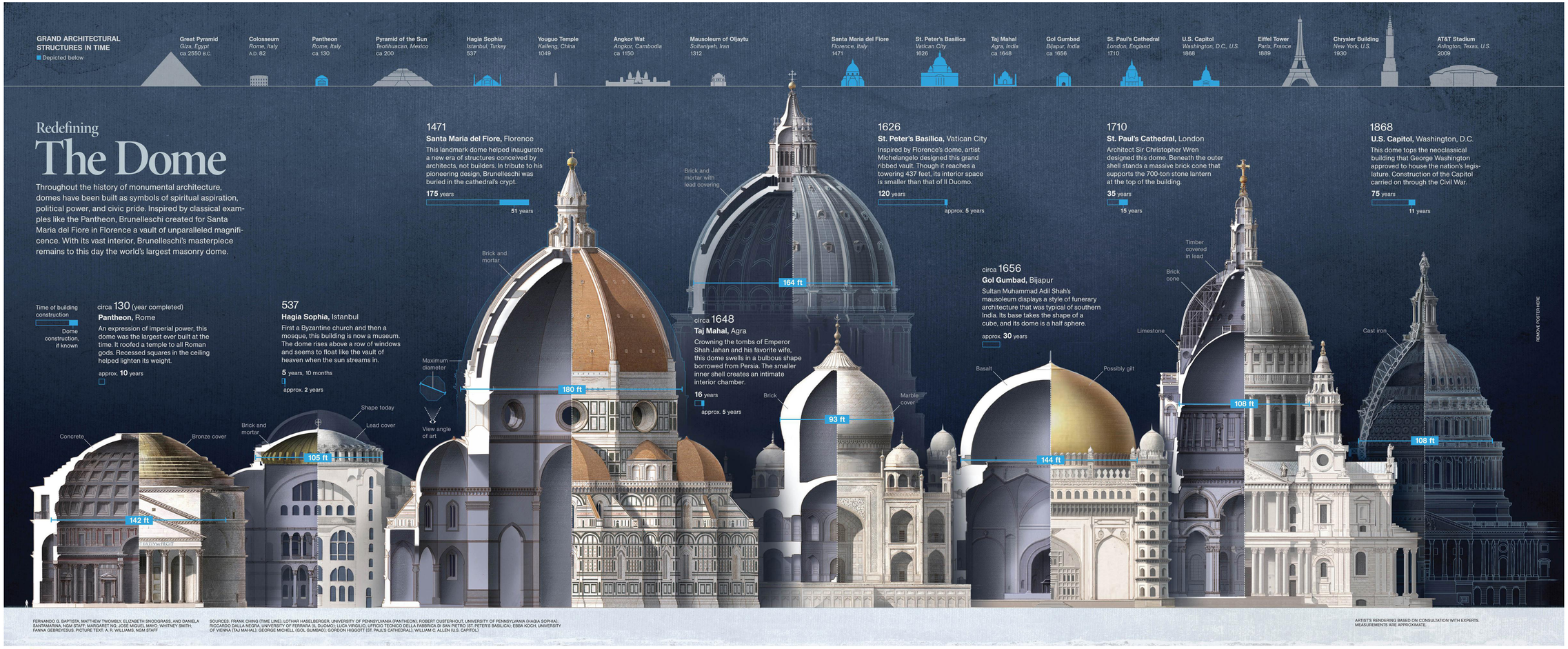
DECEMBER 31, 2025

HKS

EVOLUTION OF THE DOME

Dome forms and materials have evolved significantly over time, beginning with various forms of masonry and concrete. Today's domes span farther than ever with the use of steel and steel cables. Each of these domes over time are compriside of similar elements - structural ribs to cover the column-free space below and a shell to make the dome weathertight.

The structural ribs historically beared weight on a solid bearing wall as at the Pantheon in Rome. However, over time, the structures evolved to extend the ribs to the ground, allowing more free-flowing movement around the base of the dome. This evolution can be seen below in the graphic depiction of domes from National Geographic.



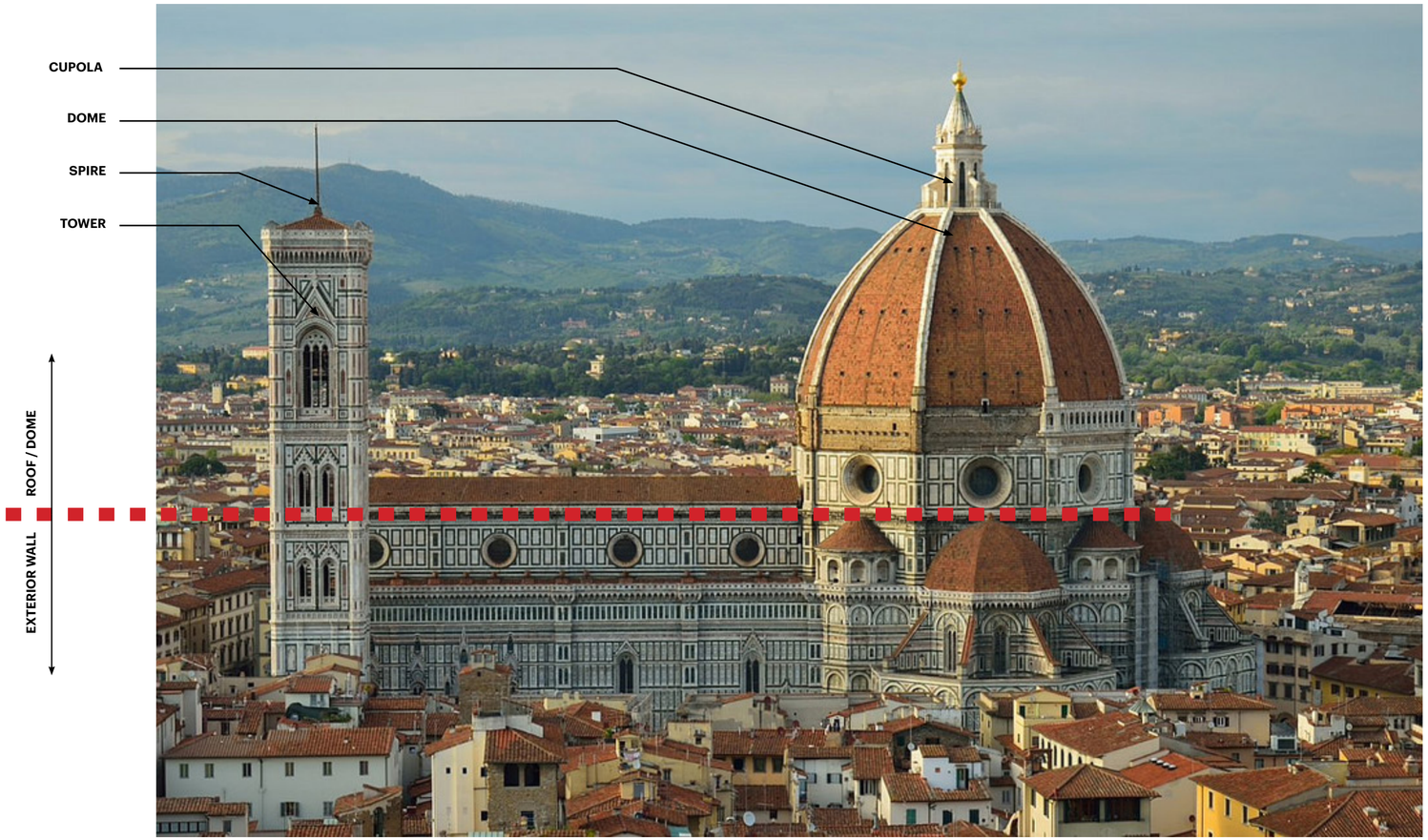
FERNANDO G. BAPTISTA, MATTHEW TWOMBLY, ELIZABETH SNODGRASS, AND DANIELA SANTAMARINA, NGM STAFF; MARGARET NG, JOSE MIGUEL MAYO, WHITNEY SMITH, FANNA GEBREYESUS, PICTURE TEXT: A. R. WILLIAMS, NGM STAFF

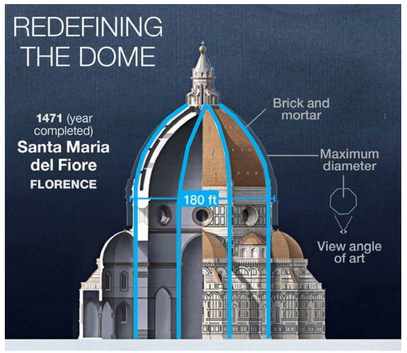
SOURCES: FRANK CHING (TIME LINE); LOTHAR HASELBERGER, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA (PANTHEON); ROBERT OUSTERHOUT, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA (HAGIA SOPHIA); RICCARDO DALLA NEGRA, UNIVERSITY OF FERRARA (IL DUOMO); LUCA VIRGILIO, UFFICIO TECNICO DELLA FABBRICA DI SAN PIETRO (ST. PETER'S BASILICA); EBBA KOCH, UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA (TAJ MAHAL); GEORGE MICHELL (GOL GUMBAD); GORDON HIGGOTT (ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL); WILLIAM C. ALLEN (U.S. CAPITOL)

ARTIST'S RENDERING BASED ON CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS. MEASUREMENTS ARE APPROXIMATE.

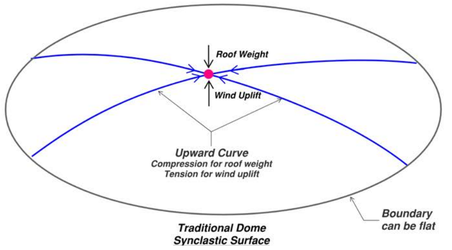
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

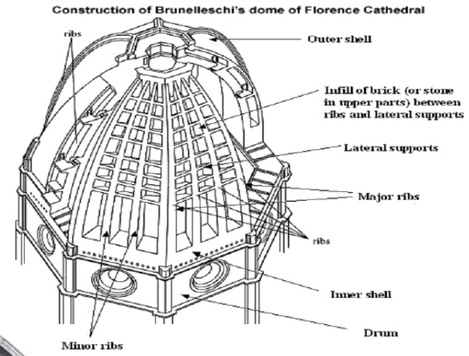
TRADITIONAL DOME ELEMENTS

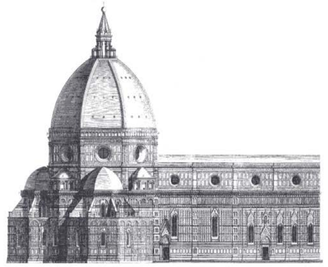


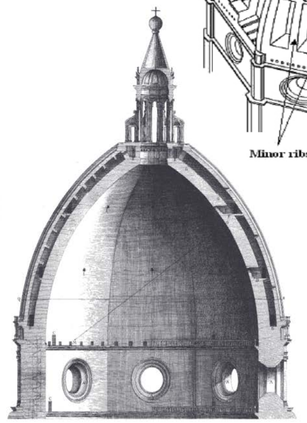


EXTENT OF MAJOR STRUCTURAL RIBS



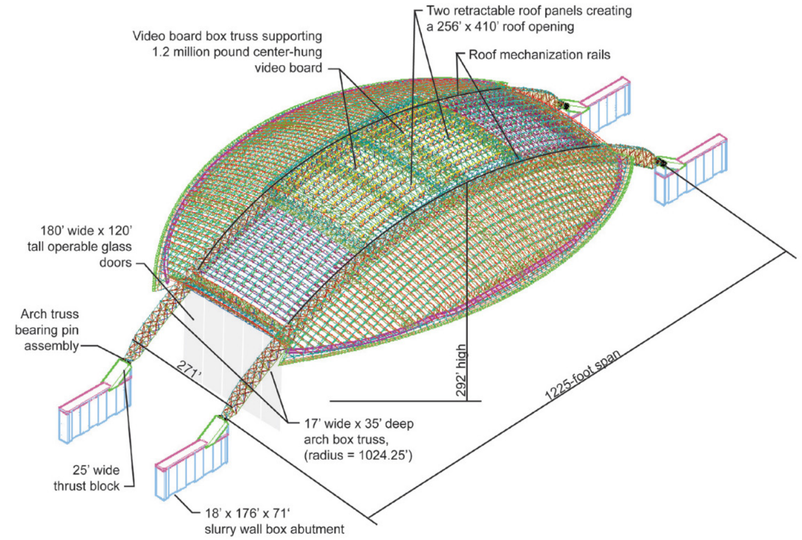






EVOLUTION OF THE DOME

Since the Height Act was established in 1910, dome structures have evolved significantly to create large, open, column-free environments. Seen here are four examples of dome structures constructed since 1910. Dorton Arena, constructed in 1952, consists of a hyperbolic paraboloid roof shape constructed of two steel arches connected by steel tension cables. In 1964, Cassell Coliseum at Virginia Tech created a large open space for it's arena floor using concrete and laminated wood arches with steel tension rods. Also in 1964, the Astrodome used a steel lamella dome to create the first indoor major league baseball park. In 2009, AT&T Stadium opened with the longest single-span roof structure in the world by using a pair of steel arched box trusses to create the dome that covers the stadium seating bowl.



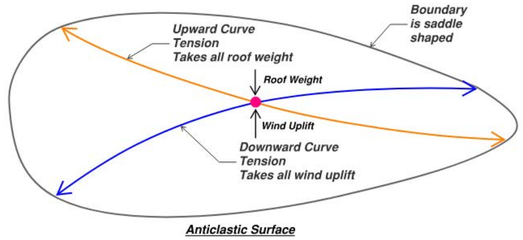
2009 - AT&T Stadium; Steel Arched Box Truss Dome

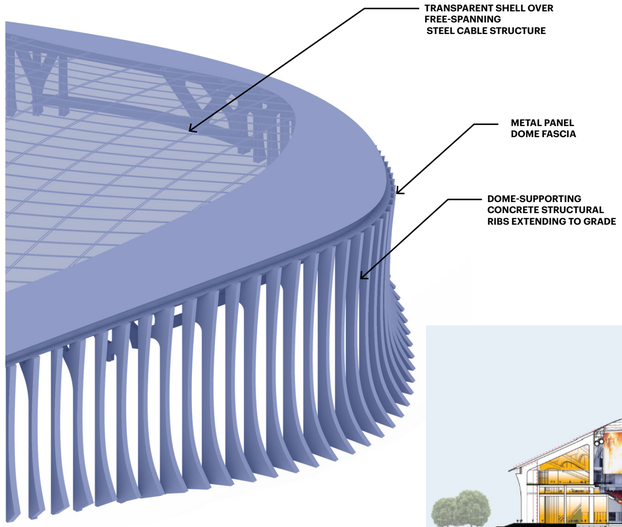
1952 - Dorton Arena; Hyperbolic Paraboloid Dome

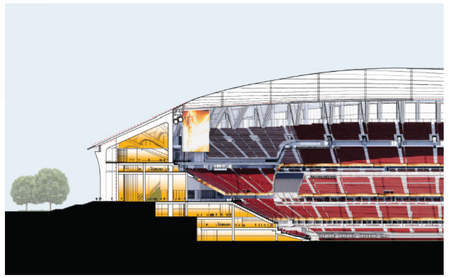
1964 - Cassell Coliseum; Free-Spanning Concrete and Laminated Wood Dome

1964 - Houston Astrodome; Steel Lamella Dome

RFK CAMPUS STADIUM DOME ELEMENTS



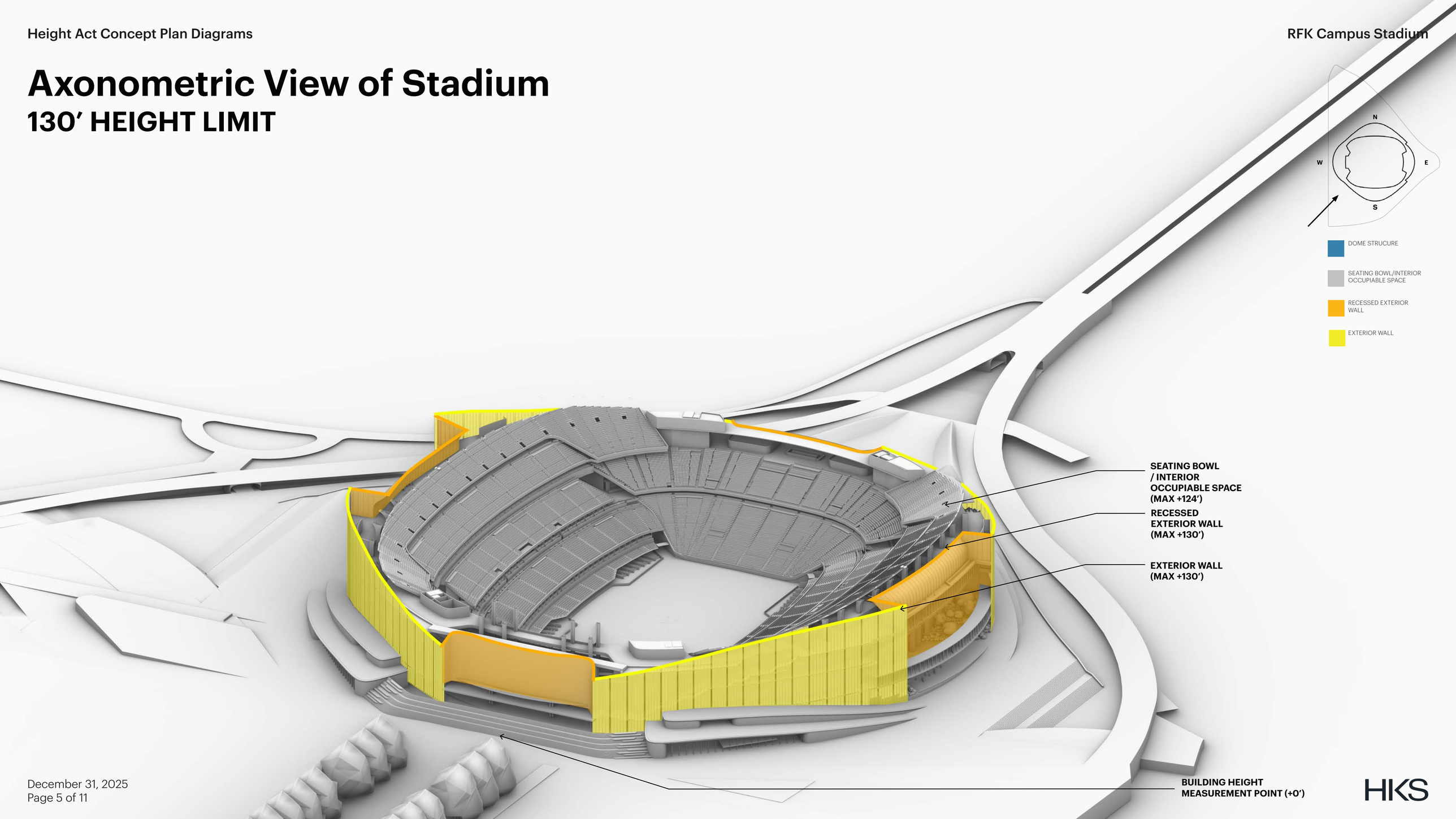




HKS

Axonometric View of Stadium

130’ HEIGHT LIMIT

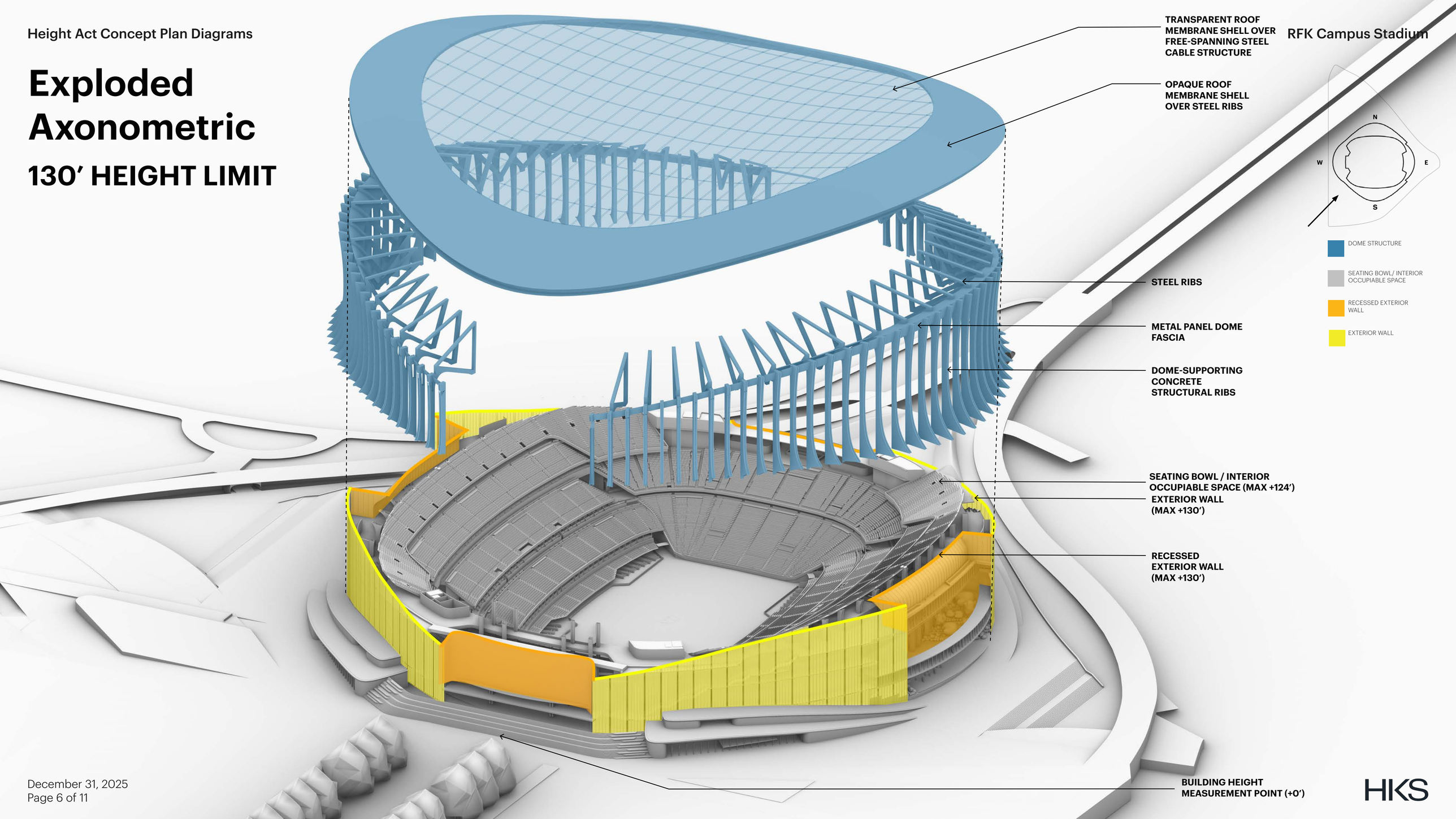


HKS

Exploded Axonometric

130’ HEIGHT LIMIT

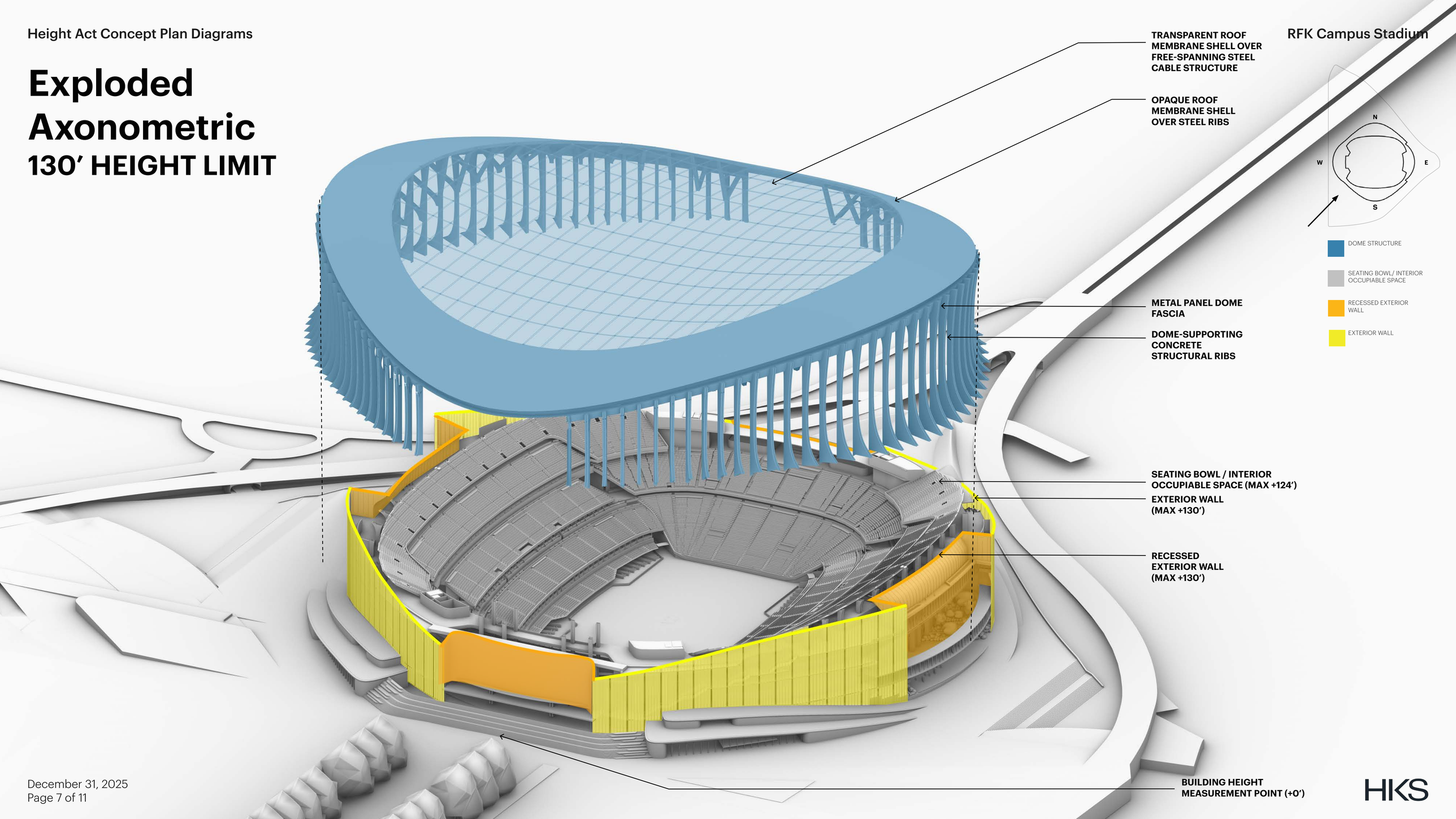
RFK Campus Stadium



HKS

Exploded Axonometric
130’ HEIGHT LIMIT

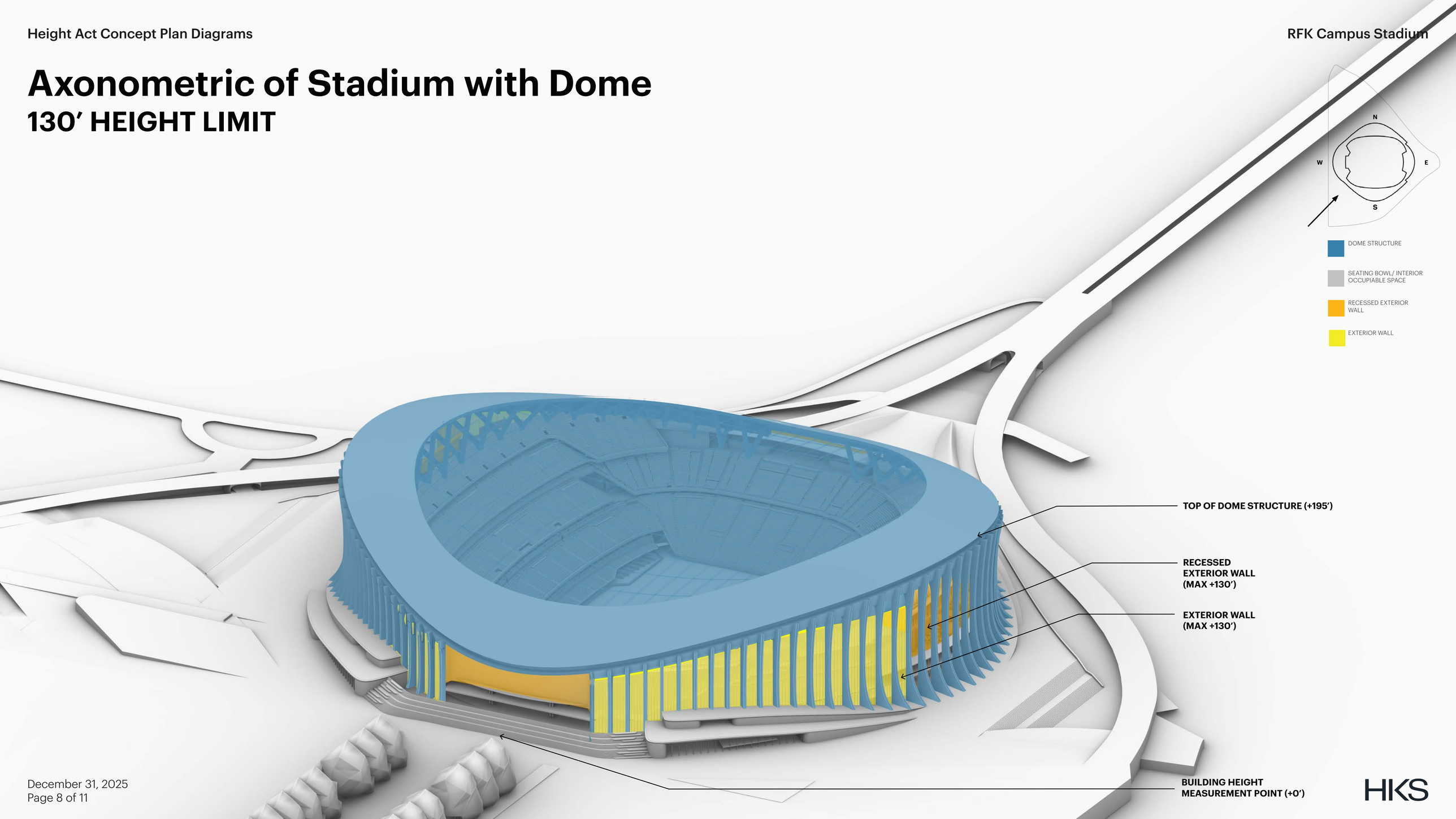
RFK Campus Stadium



HKS

Axonometric of Stadium with Dome

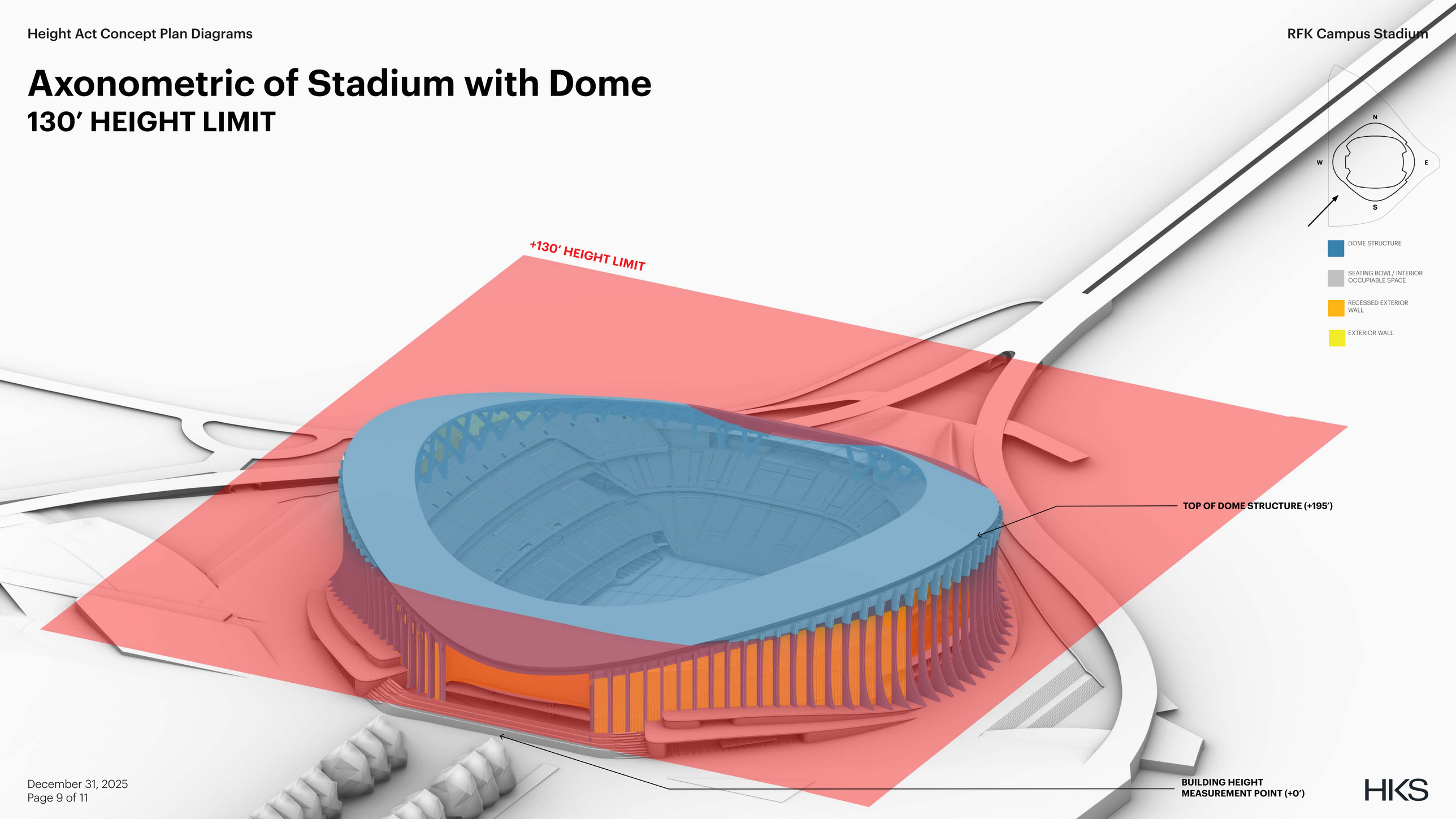
130’ HEIGHT LIMIT



HKS

Axonometric of Stadium with Dome

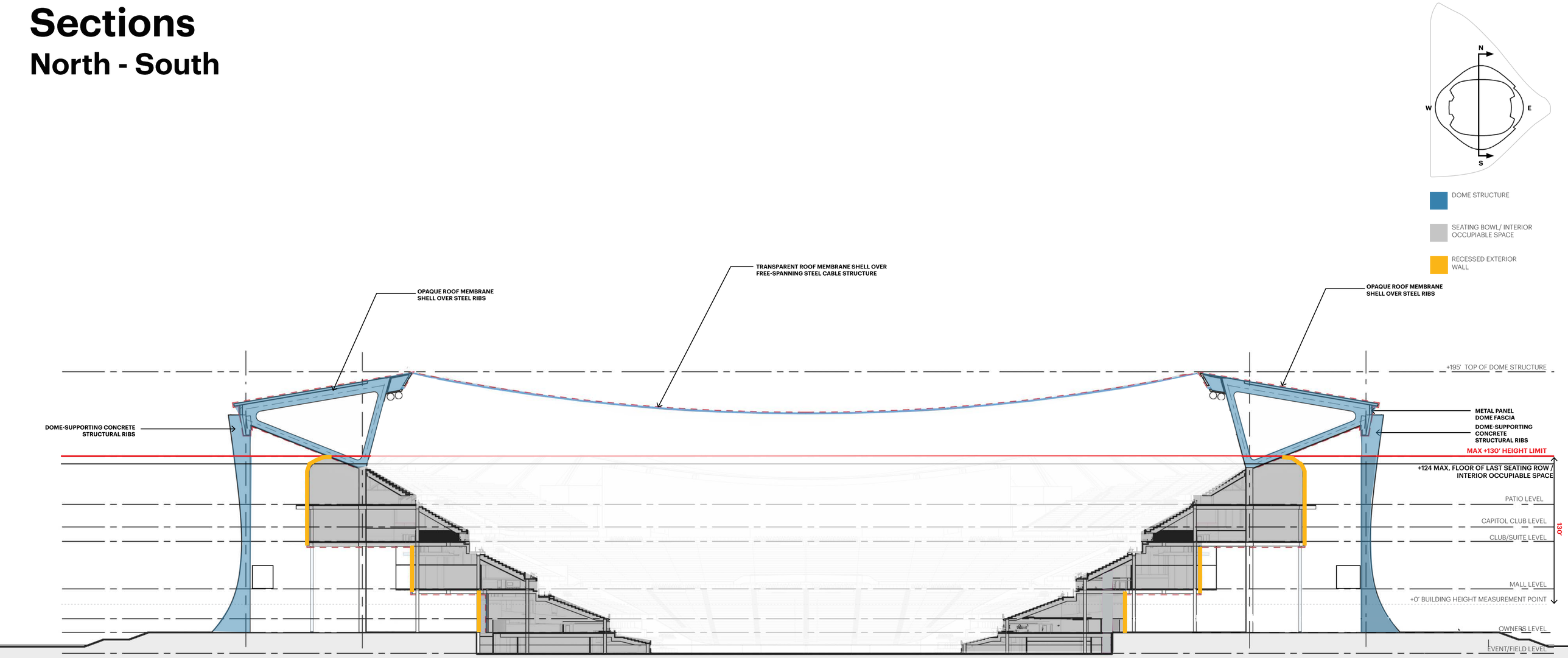
130’ HEIGHT LIMIT



HKS

Sections

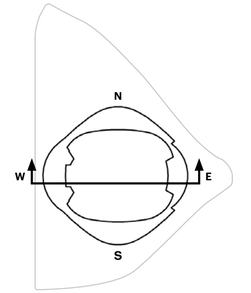
North - South



HKS

Sections

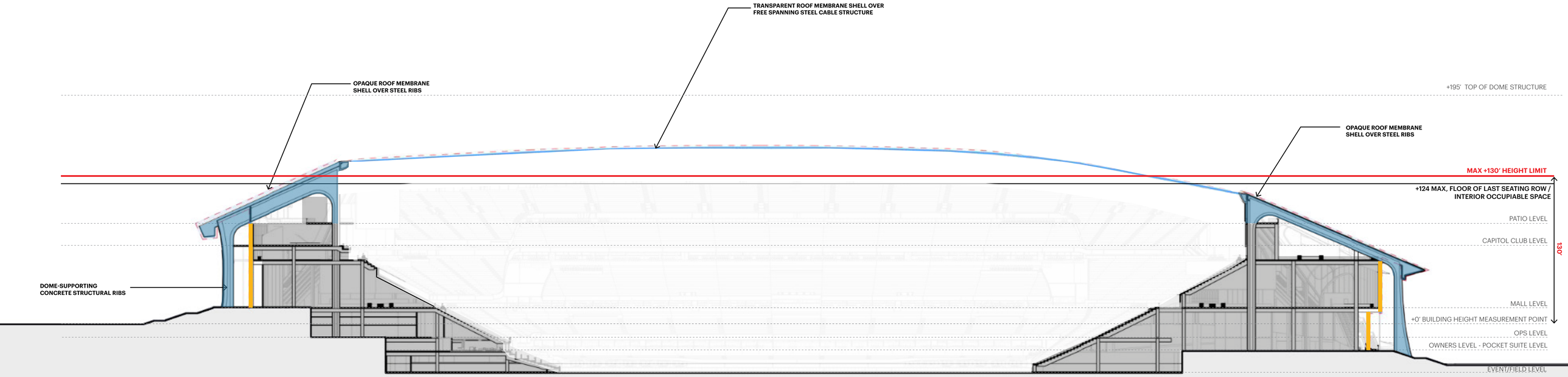
East-West



DOME STRUCTURE

SEATING BOWL/ INTERIOR OCCUPIABLE SPACE

RECESSED EXTERIOR WALL



HKS

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS 17 MAY 1910

401 F STREET NW SUITE 312 WASHINGTON DC 20001-2728 202-504-2200 FAX 202-504-2195 WWW.CFA.GOV

26 March 2026

Dear Mr. Hanlon:

In its meeting of 19 March, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a concept design for a new stadium to be constructed on the former site of the Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, located along the Anacostia River at 2400 East Capitol Street, SE. The Commission expressed strong support for the proposal, but did not take an action, providing the following comments for the development of the design.

In their discussion, the Commission members characterized the proposal as elegant, citing its allusion to Classical design principles, particularly the monumental perimeter colonnade. However, they recommended strengthening the architectural expression of the east and west entrances—currently proposed as immense, featureless, and unwelcoming glass planes that interrupt the continuity of the colonnade—by completing the perimeter colonnade or incorporating a projecting portico at what should be the stadium's most important architectural features, which also mark the city's primary east–west axis. Noting the importance of creating the best setting for the stadium as a grand civic monument, they criticized the location of the large parking garage proposed to be built on the southeastern side of the stadium, where it would compromise the views from the east. Instead, they recommended locating this garage within a development site across the festival plaza opposite the D.C. Armory, which would frame views from the west and reinforce the urban setting of the stadium.

The Commission commends the District of Columbia and Washington's football team for their vision in returning the stadium to this site and looks forward to further review of the concept design for this important project. Please continue to consult with the staff which, as always, is available to assist you.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Luebke, FAIA
Secretary

Brian Hanlon, Project Executive
RFK Stadium Project Management Office
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 324
Washington, DC 20004

cc: Lance Evans, HKS
Jim Burnett, OBJ
Andy VanHorn, Washington Commanders
Jen Nersessian, National Park Service
Marcel Acosta, National Capital Planning Commission