Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: December 3, 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)46316

APPLICANT'S REQUEST
Approval of final site and building plans

PROPOSED ACTION
Approve final 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 final 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. 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 reviewed the project's preliminary plans at the April 2026 meeting and was supportive of the overall design approach, providing specific recommended refinements and requests for additional information. The applicant has addressed the Commission's recommendations as part of the current submission except for those related to parking, transportation, and signage. The applicant anticipates submitting the accompanying stadium parking garages for preliminary review in early 2027 and will submit the signage package for review at a future date.

KEY INFORMATION

- The original RFK Stadium was constructed in 1961 and closed to the public in 2019.

- 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 65,000-seat capacity and will serve as a venue for year-round activities including sports, arts, and cultural events.
- Under the National Capital Planning Act, NCPC has advisory authority for District projects outside the Central Area. The Commission previously reviewed preliminary plans for the project at the April 2026 meeting.
- Overall, the applicant has been responsive to the Commission's comments and will address outstanding parking and signage issues in future project submissions. The Commission reviewed concept plans for the stadium garage structures in October 2026, and preliminary review is anticipated in early 2027. The applicant will submit the stadium signage package for review at a future date.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Approves the final 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.

Commends the applicant for working with NCPC and other stakeholders regarding the stadium, which has resulted in a design that is appropriate for its setting as a prominent Capital Gateway on a preeminent linear view corridor identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Notes the two proposed stadium parking garages will be developed independently from the stadium and are anticipated to be submitted for preliminary review in early 2027.

Notes the applicant will address stadium-related parking and transportation issues raised by the Commission as part of future preliminary and final submissions for Garages G1 and G2.

Notes the applicant will submit the stadium's exterior signage and digital graphics for review in the future, and **requests** the applicant provide rendered views from the stadium grounds, East Capitol Street, the Whitney Young Memorial Bridge, and the Anacostia Commons as part of the submission.

Recommends that the stadium signage strike a balance between creating a dynamic visitor experience and protecting the monumental core's nighttime image and the Anacostia River waterfront's natural areas.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	**February 2026** – Review of stadium concept plans. **April 2026** – Approval of preliminary stadium site and building plans. **October 2026** – Review of concept plans for stadium garages G1 and G2.
Remaining actions (anticipated)	– Preliminary and final review of stadium garages G1 and G2. – Review of stadium signage and graphics package. – Review of new Sportsplex on the RFK Campus.

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, serves as a prominent gateway to the L'Enfant City. Of particular interest to NCPC is the project's potential impacts to the system of streets, public spaces, and important viewsheds, namely East Capitol Street, as a major axial street. Commission comments at preliminary review in April 2026 were generally supportive of the stadium design overall, recommending site and building design refinements and requesting further information for final review. In particular, the Commission requested the applicant provide information related to site design elements, entries, perimeter security, lighting, transportation, parking, accessible circulation, signage, and graphics. The submitted final plans are responsive to Commission recommendations and generally consistent with the policy guidance in the Federal Elements of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. Staff recommends the **Commission approve the final site and building plans for a proposed new stadium and surrounding site improvements on the RFK Memorial Stadium Campus, located in Washington, DC.**

Overall, the applicant has worked closely with NCPC and other stakeholders to create a design that is a successful addition to the monumental landscape of Washington, DC. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission commend the applicant for working with NCPC and other stakeholders regarding the stadium, which has resulted in a design that is appropriate for its setting as a prominent Capital Gateway on a preeminent linear view corridor identified in the Comprehensive Plan.**

The two proposed stadium parking garages will be developed independently from the stadium and are anticipated to be submitted for preliminary review in early 2027. Traffic and parking recommendations included in the preliminary review of the stadium will be considered through the parking garage review process. As such, the applicant will address stadium-related parking and

transportation issues raised by the Commission as part of future preliminary and final submissions for Garages G1 and G2.

Analysis

While the RFK Campus redevelopment includes five districts, the focus of the following analysis is the Stadium District development that will be in place on opening day.

Stadium Design

At preliminary review, the Commission encouraged 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. 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. In response, the applicant further articulated the facades to emphasize the horizontality of each level and included balconies. These refinements along with proposed vegetation within the vestibules will help to create more inviting entries on these sides of the stadium. Also of note, the east and west entries were refined since preliminary review to further emphasize the vertical structure along the expanse of entrance glazing which is intended to continue the pattern of the surrounding colonnade. These entries also include dramatically sculpted canopies at the upper levels and canopies over the doorways to welcome visitors.

At both concept and preliminary review, the Commission recommended that, as the stadium design is developed, the applicant study 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 outlined in Comprehensive Plan policy UD.B.1.5. In response, the applicant analyzed the proposed stadium lighting levels for event and non-event evenings in comparison to the Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, and Lincoln Memorial. The submission notes that proposed facade lighting for the stadium will range from 0.5 to 2.5 foot-lamberts (fL), levels which are in line with appropriate brightness of the nearby monuments and below the luminance values at the Lincoln Memorial. Additionally, the facade lighting will allow for a customizable display that can adjust by day, event, or function. The maximum event day lighting levels are 2.5 fL. On non-event days, the lighting can be further dimmed, programmed to turn-off or be reduced during late night, non-operational hours. To help meet the project's energy needs the updated design also includes an opaque roof membrane with integrated white solar panels.

At preliminary review, the Commission also requested more information on the design of stadium signage and digital graphics. The applicant notes that the signage package is currently under development. The Comprehensive Plan outlines that the federal government should work with District of Columbia agencies to sensitively locate and design interpretive, directional, advertising, and other functional signs in a way that complements the civic qualities of the monumental core and contributes to the public realm's overall visual character (UD.B.3.11). Further, the Urban Design Element states that digital and motion signage, illuminated billboards, and/or other lighting

should not detract from the setting of the National Mall, capital gateway views of the monumental core, or skyline views to important symbols and civic buildings, particularly in and around the monumental core. Any proposed illuminated signage that could impact the monumental core or other major park spaces and natural areas including waterfronts should be extensively modeled and analyzed for potential impacts prior to implementation (UD.B.1.5). To confirm alignment with these policies, the applicant will submit the stadium's exterior signage and digital graphics for review in the future, and staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant provide rendered views from the stadium grounds, East Capitol Street, the Whitney Young Memorial Bridge, and the Anacostia Commons as part of the submission.** Further, staff suggests the **Commission recommend that the stadium signage strike a balance between creating a dynamic visitor experience and protecting the monumental core's nighttime image and the Anacostia River waterfront's natural areas.**

Site Design

At preliminary review of the stadium, the Commission requested more detailed information related to site design elements, perimeter security, and accessible circulation. The final submission is generally responsive to these requests. The submitted landscape plans show areas where vegetative buffering is used to screen plaza areas from surrounding traffic and loading, as well as bioretention areas integrated throughout the stadium grounds. The plans show several layers of event day and non-event day perimeter security elements including vegetated site walls, bollards, post and rail systems, and no-climb fencing. The submission notes that the aim is 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. New prominent security elements include three large security canopies at the north, west, and south entries with a sculptural form and colonnades complementary to the stadium architecture as guided by Urban Design Element policy UD.C.3.8.

The Comprehensive Plan's Visitors and Commemoration Element encourages projects to ensure accessibility to visitor attractions for all users. In response to the Commission request at preliminary review, the submission includes the universally accessible circulation routes through the site and to the stadium podium. The plans provide accessible pathways for all four stadium entries, circulating around the entirety of the stadium grounds, and through the Festival Plaza to the east of the stadium.

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 November 12, 2026 the Coordinating Committee forwarded the proposed final site and building plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal was coordinated with all participating agencies. The participating agencies included NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, the DC State Historic Preservation Office, the District Department of Energy and Environment, the District Office of Planning, the District Department of Transportation, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approved the stadium concept at its July 16, 2026 meeting, and the revised concept was approved November 19, 2026 without presentation.

ONLINE REFERENCE

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

- Submission Package

Prepared by Laura Shipman
11/24/2026

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

National Capital Planning Commission

New Stadium at RFK Campus

2400 East Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC

Approval of Final Site and Building Plans

Mayor of the District of Columbia,

RFK Stadium Project Management Office

December 3, 2026 | File: 8721

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: December 3, 2026

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

Applicant Request: Approval of Final Site and Building Plans

Session: Staff Presentation

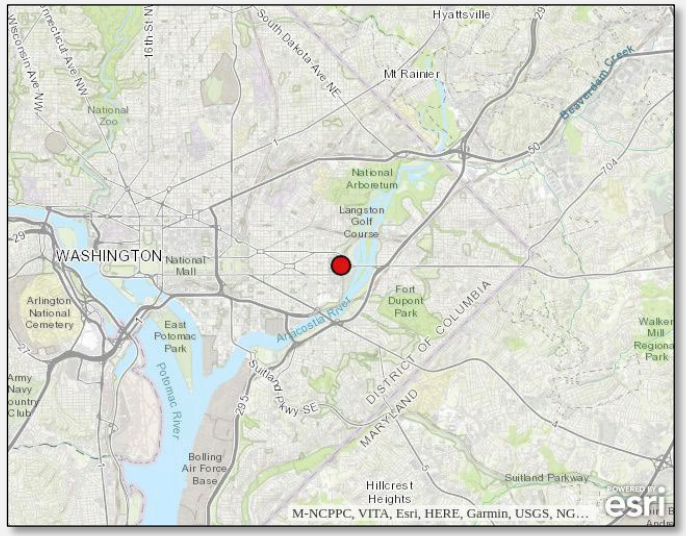
NCPC Review Officer: Laura Shipman

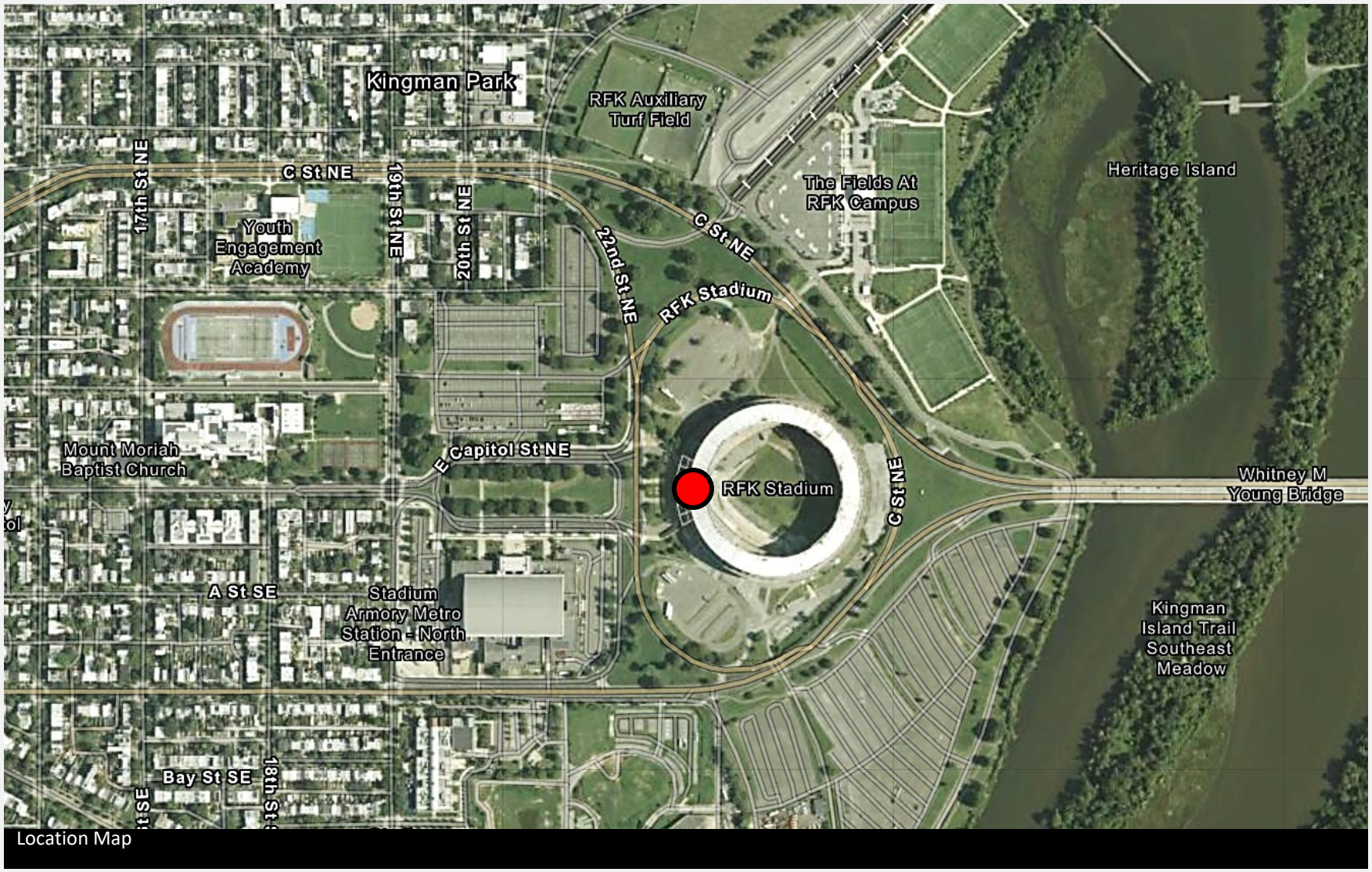
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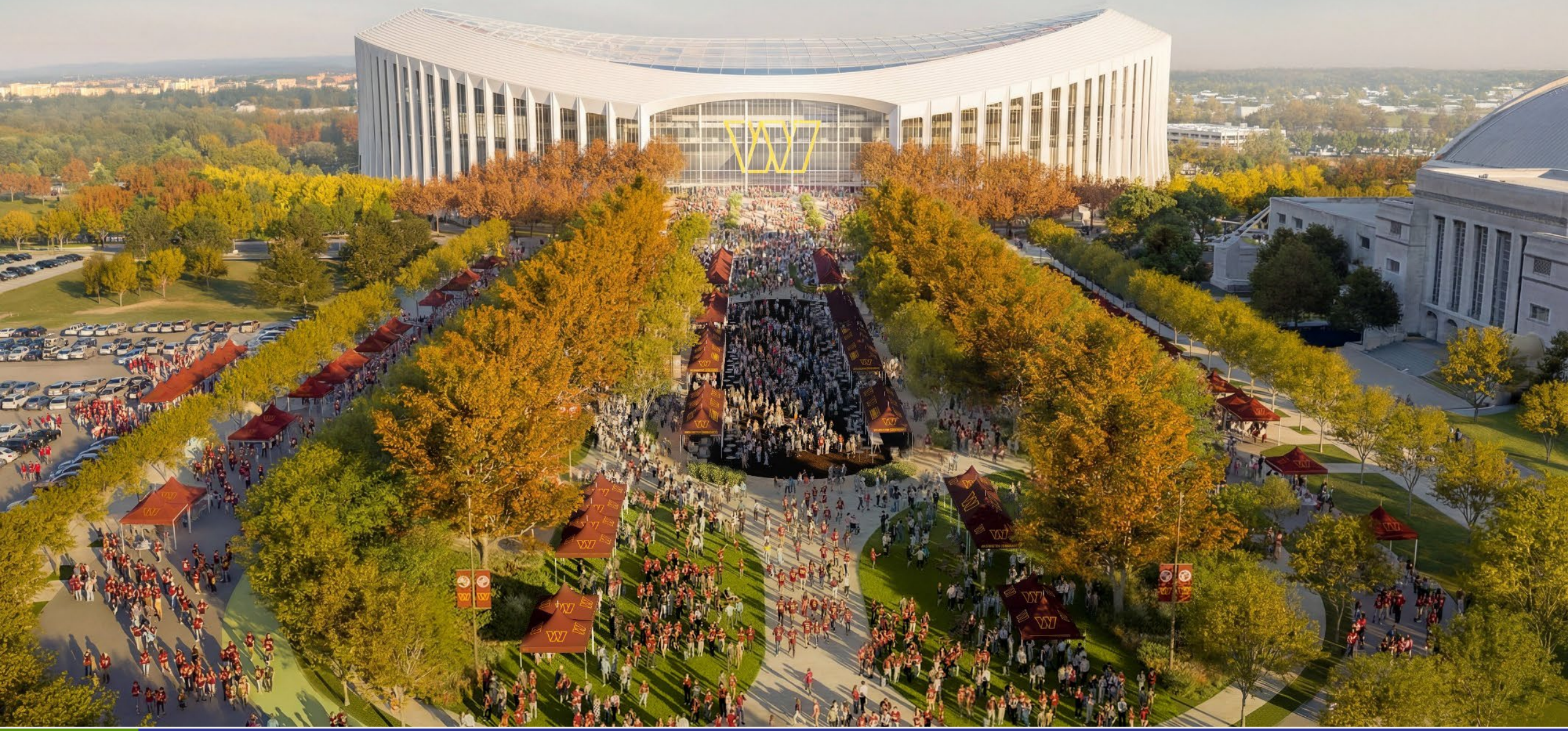
Site Location





Location Map

Previous Aerial View from West (April Preliminary Review)



Updated Aerial View from West

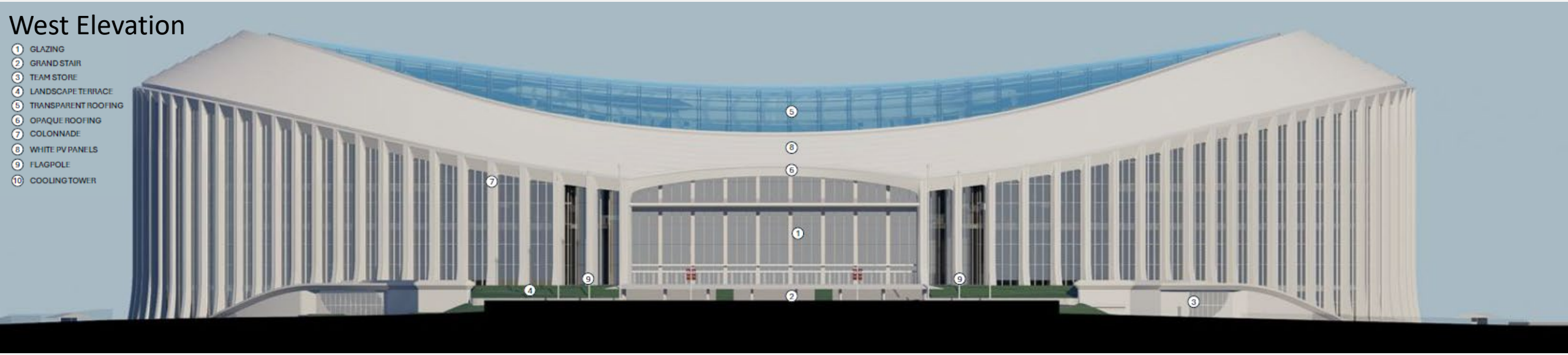


Site Plan

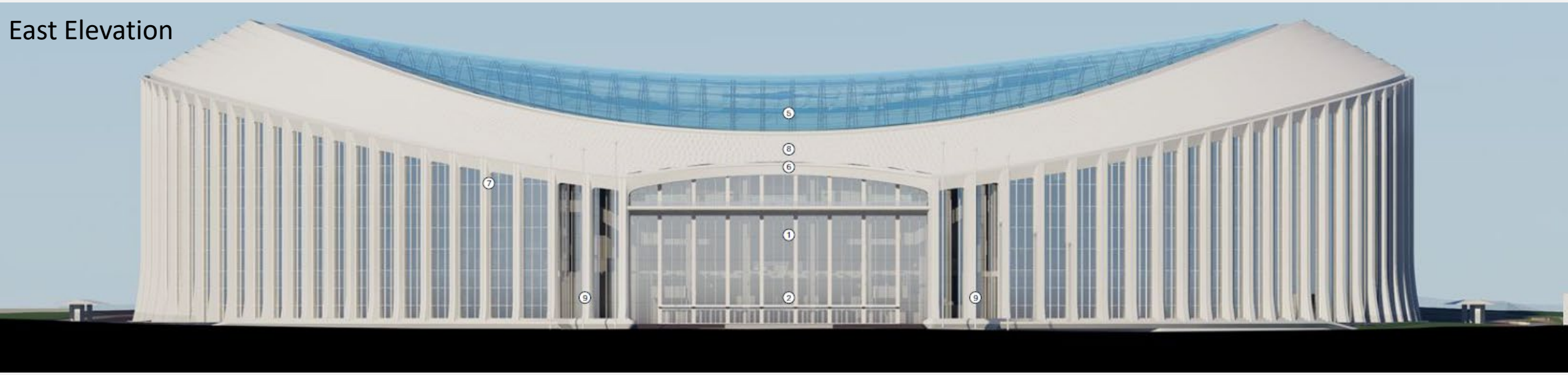

Parking Garage / Surface Parking
Cooling Tower
Ball Fields
Surface Parking
DC Armory
Surface Parking
Parking Garage
Surface Parking
N
0 50' 100' 200' 300'

East and West Elevations

West Elevation



East Elevation



View of East Entry



North and South Elevations

North Elevation



South Elevation



View of North Entry



Lighting

Exterior Lighting Intent

- Reinforce important view corridors
- Pay homage and respect to the DC skyline
- Create gathering spaces that balance safety and intimacy
- Promote wayfinding and public engagement
- Guide visitors as they access the site and stadium
- Accentuate landscape and architecture with highly controlled sources and integrated details to limit light spill and glare

Softly illuminated trees via landscape mounted fixtures

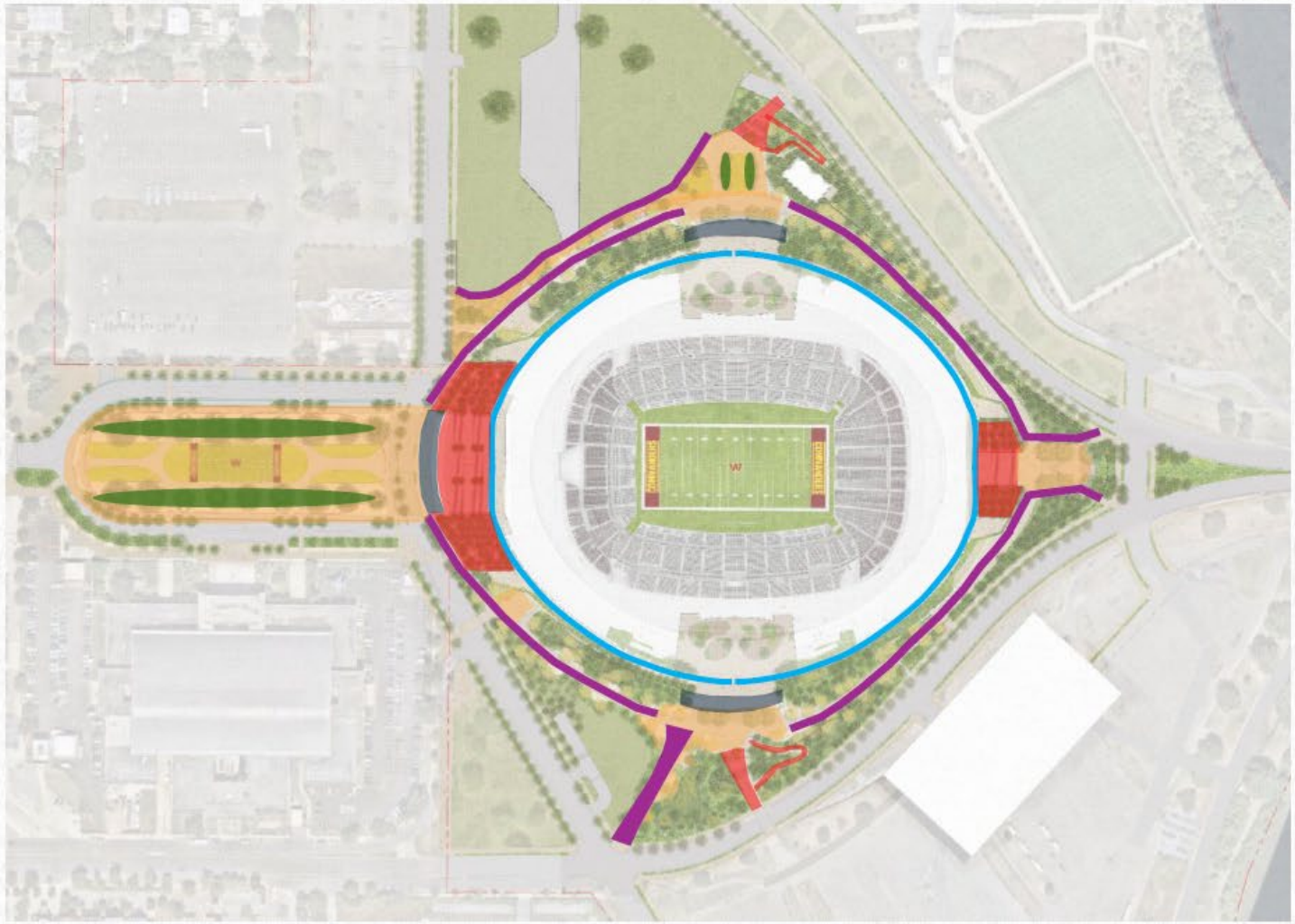
Dark-sky friendly pole lighting along promenade and main walkways

Visually-quiet, multi-head poles throughout plazas and landscape to concentrate light on gathering areas and secondary pathways

Supplemental lighting on stairs and ramps via controlled sources on poles for egress

Security check lighting via discrete downlights recessed within canopies

Integrated lighting embedded within the architecture of the facade to illuminate the stadium with architectural details to reduce visibility of fixtures



Lighting

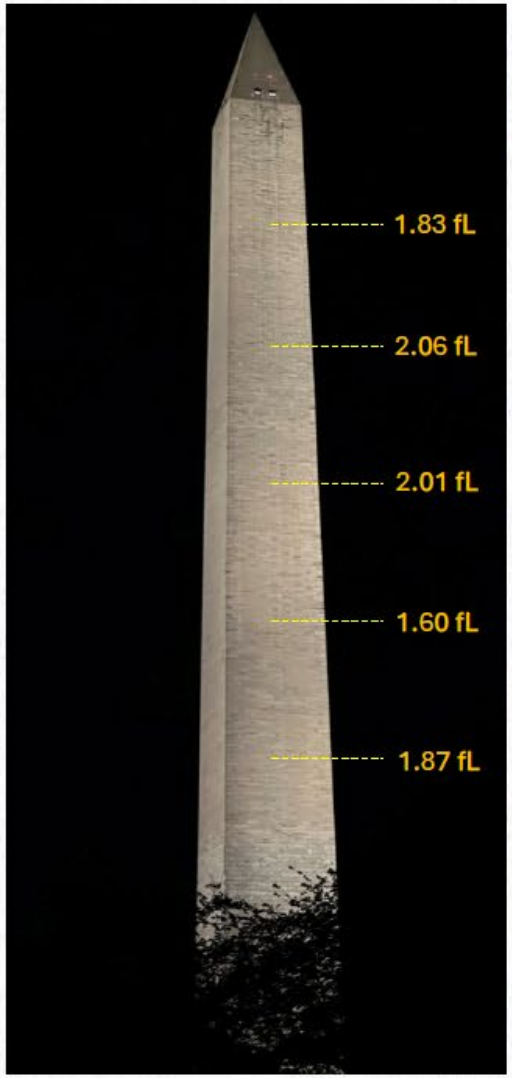
Lighting Levels

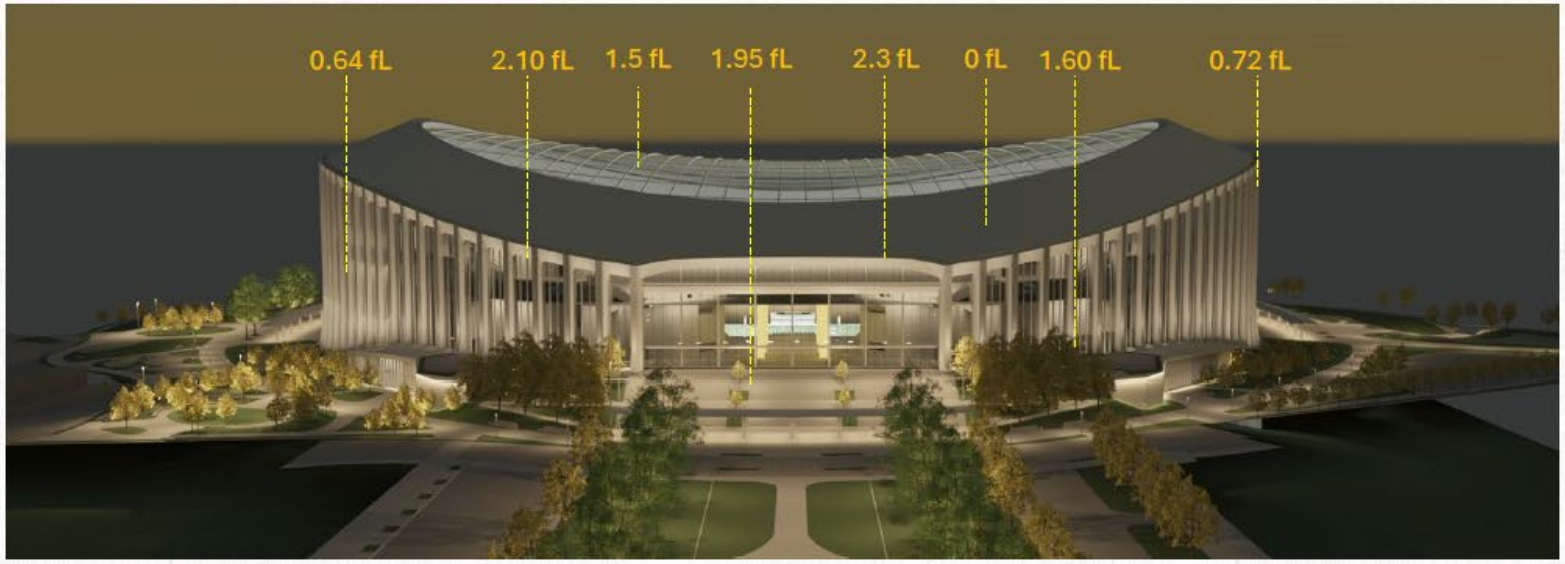
Proposed façade lighting for the RFK Campus Stadium will range from 0.5 to 2.5 foot-lamberts (fL). These levels are in-line with appropriate brightness of the nearby monuments and well below the luminance values seen at the Lincoln Memorial.

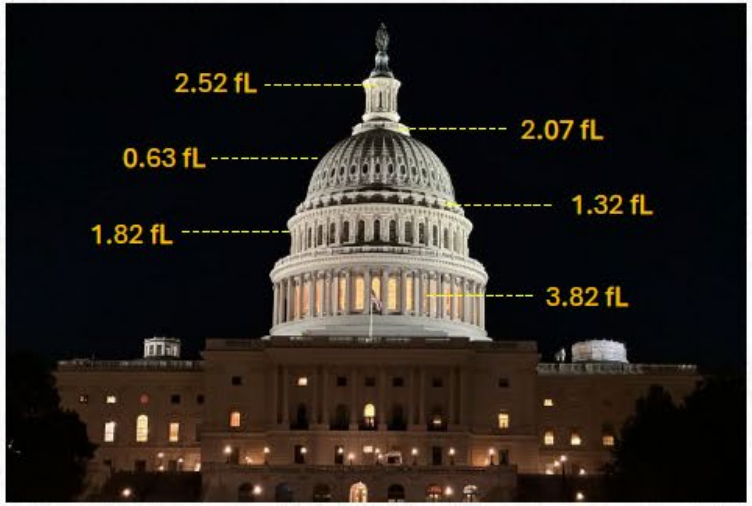
Additionally, all façade lighting will be digitally addressable to allow for a highly customizable display that can adjust by day, event, or function.

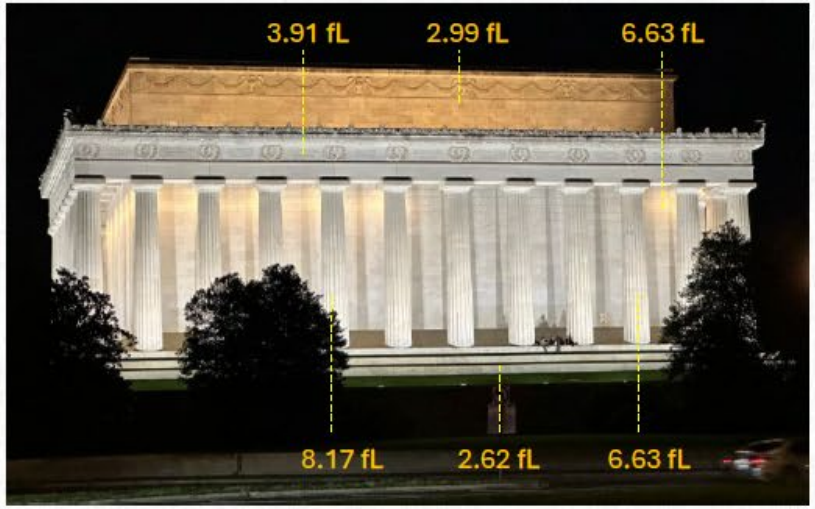
The rendering depicts an "event day" setting at the maximum level of 2.5 foot-lamberts (fL). On non-event days, the lighting can be further dimmed, programmed to turn-off or be reduced during late-night, non-operational hours.

Please note: This rendering is depicting lighting effect only on the façade and landscape with some interior lighting included. Video ribbon boards are not included.

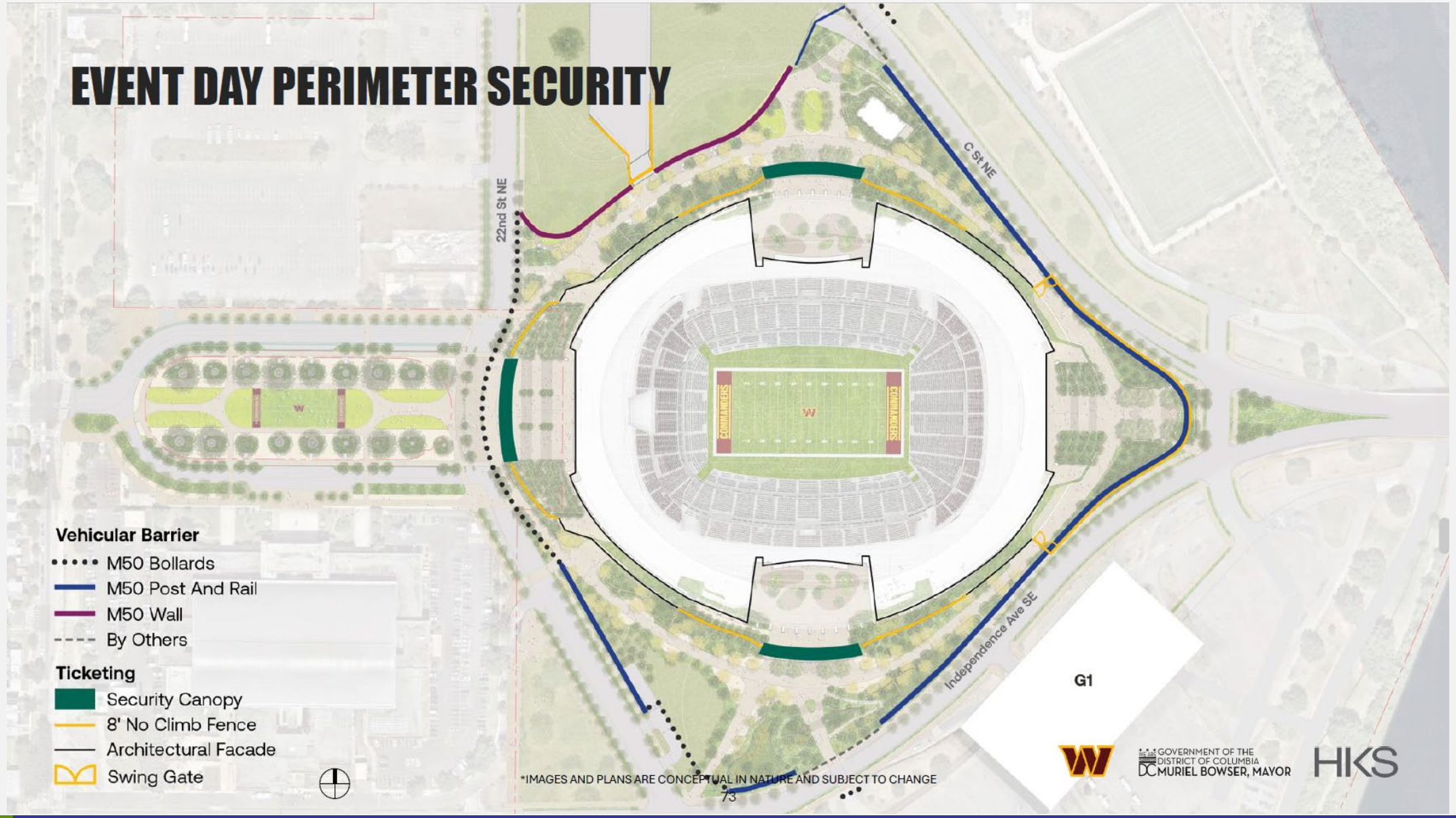








Perimeter Security



Perimeter Security

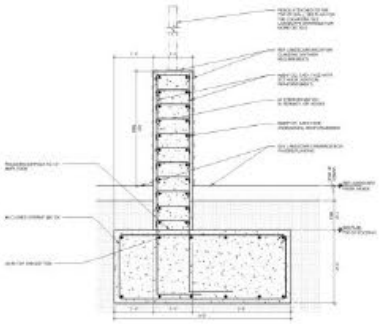
The perimeter security strategy is designed to provide controlled access during large events while maintaining a welcoming and navigable public realm. Select sections of the Stadium Site will be temporarily defined using retractable bollards, decorative fencing, and controlled entry points to manage 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.

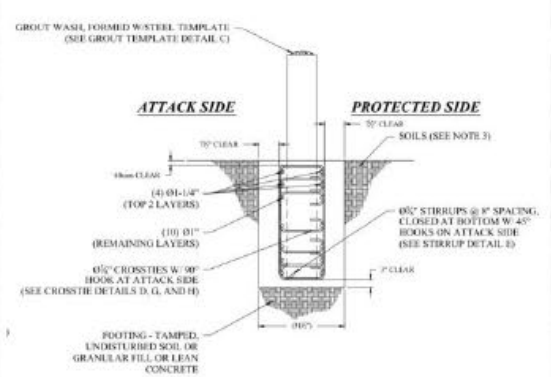
M50 Wall





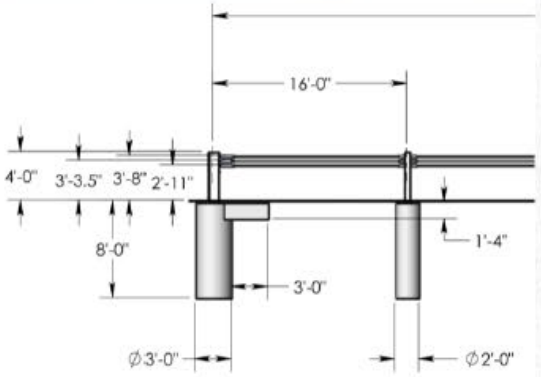
M50 Bollard





M50 Post And Rail System

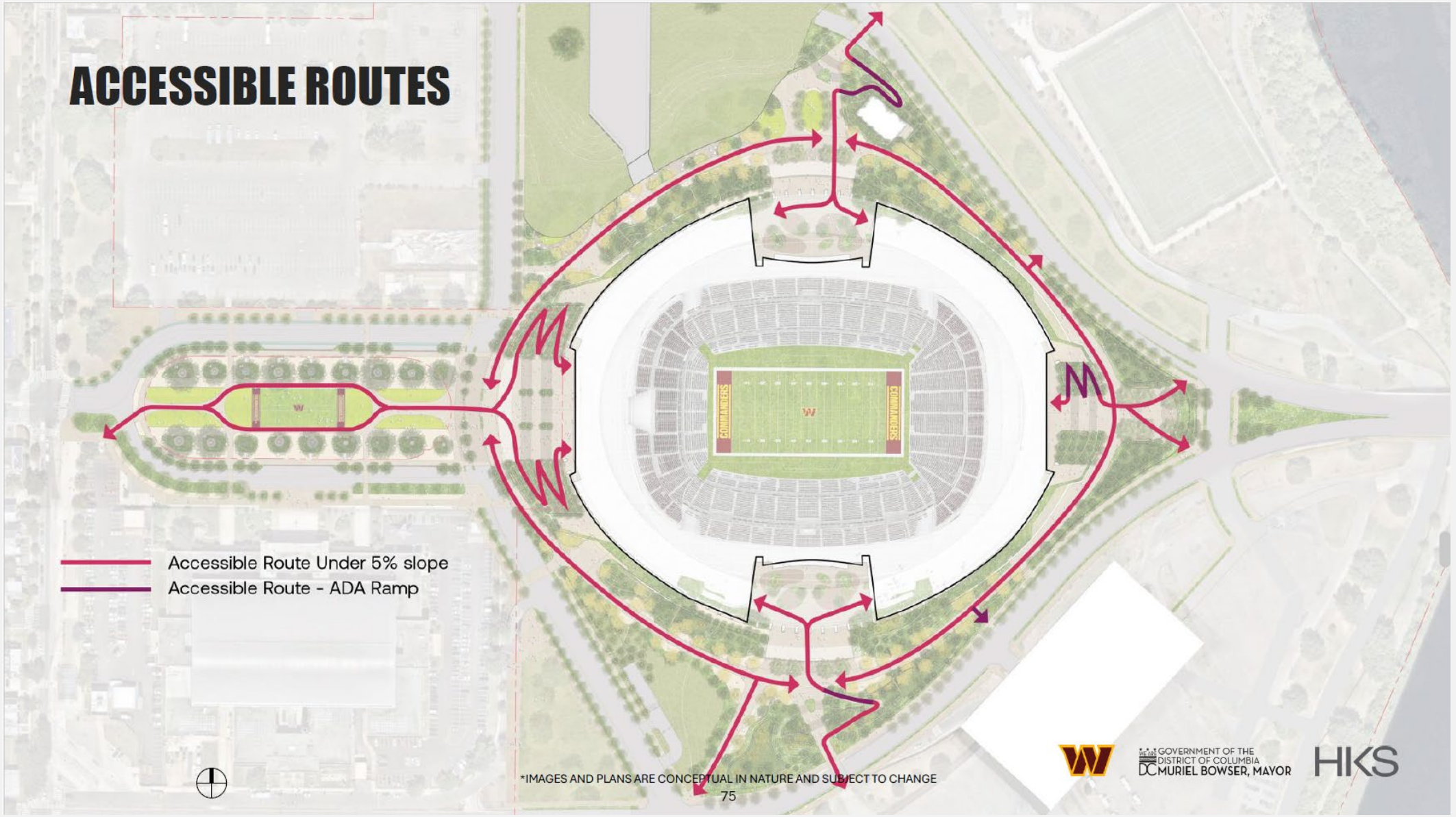




Perimeter Security



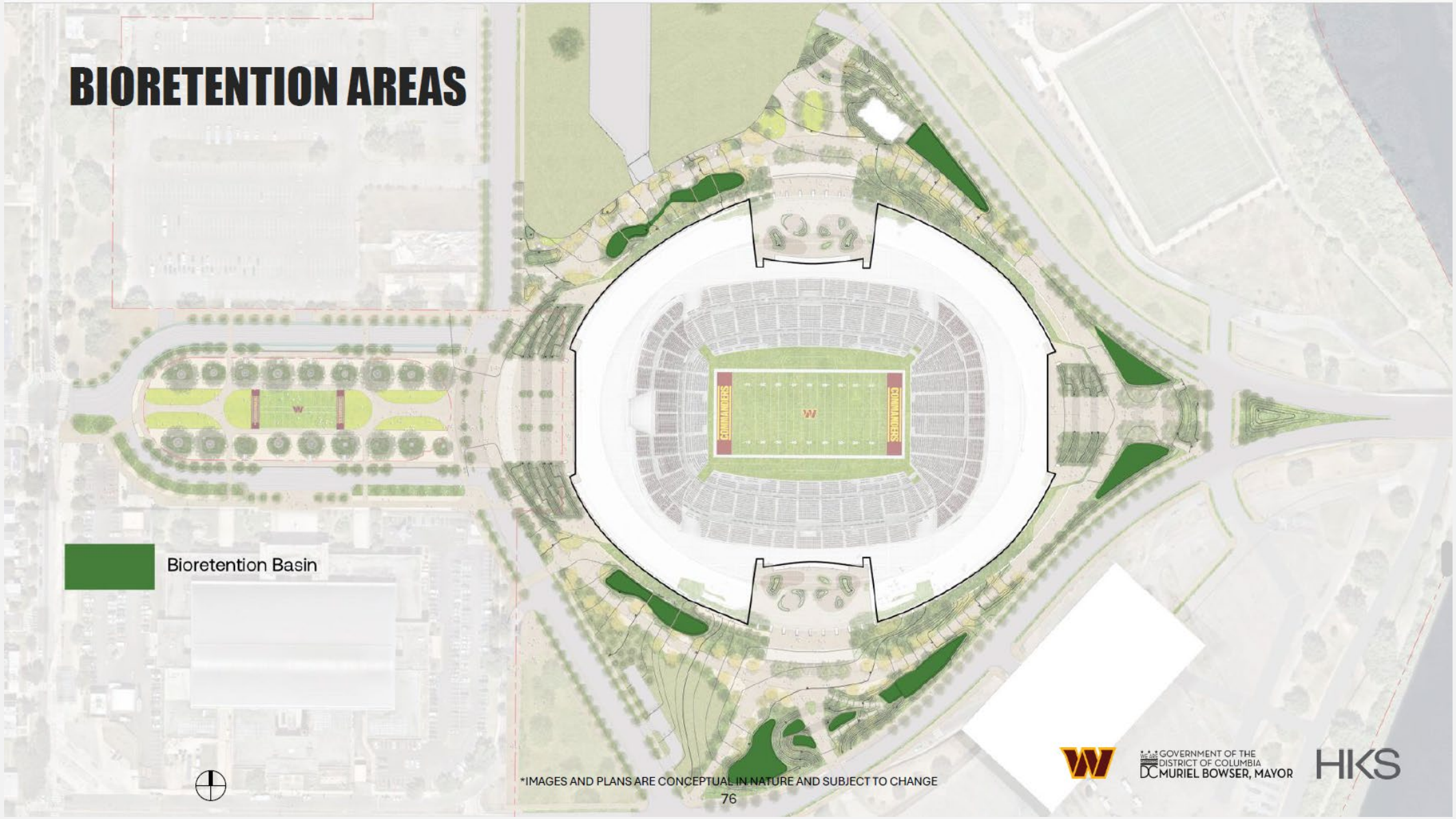
Accessible Circulation



Landscape Plans



Bioretention Areas



Aerial View from East



Additional Views



Conceptual view from West Plaza

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MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

HKS



Conceptual viewshed from Kingman Park

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HKS



Conceptual viewshed from Anacostia River

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Conceptual viewshed from far west

*image updated to match current intent of design



*IMAGES AND PLANS ARE CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Conceptual viewshed from Hill East with D.C. Armory in foreground

56



Conceptual viewshed from Anacostia Hills escarpment

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Conceptual viewshed from east

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Conceptual viewshed from east

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DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

HKS

GAMEDAY VIEW

The pedestrian arrival sequence from the Metrorail station to the stadium unfolds as a clear and celebratory procession through a festival plaza. Generous walkways, framed by trees and active gathering spaces, guide visitors toward the stadium while maintaining strong sightlines. The experience is designed to feel intuitive and energetic, accommodating peak event crowds while remaining comfortable and legible on non-event days.



GAMEDAY VIEW



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GAMEDAY VIEW



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GAMEDAY VIEW



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GAMEDAY VIEW



NON-GAMEDAY VIEW



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