

16th Street NW Landscaped Medians

16th Street, NW between H and K Streets, Washington, DC

Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

District Department of Transportation

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: June 4, 2026

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

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary and Final Site Development Plans

Session: Executive Director

NCPC Review Officer: Stephanie Free

NCPC File Number: 8780

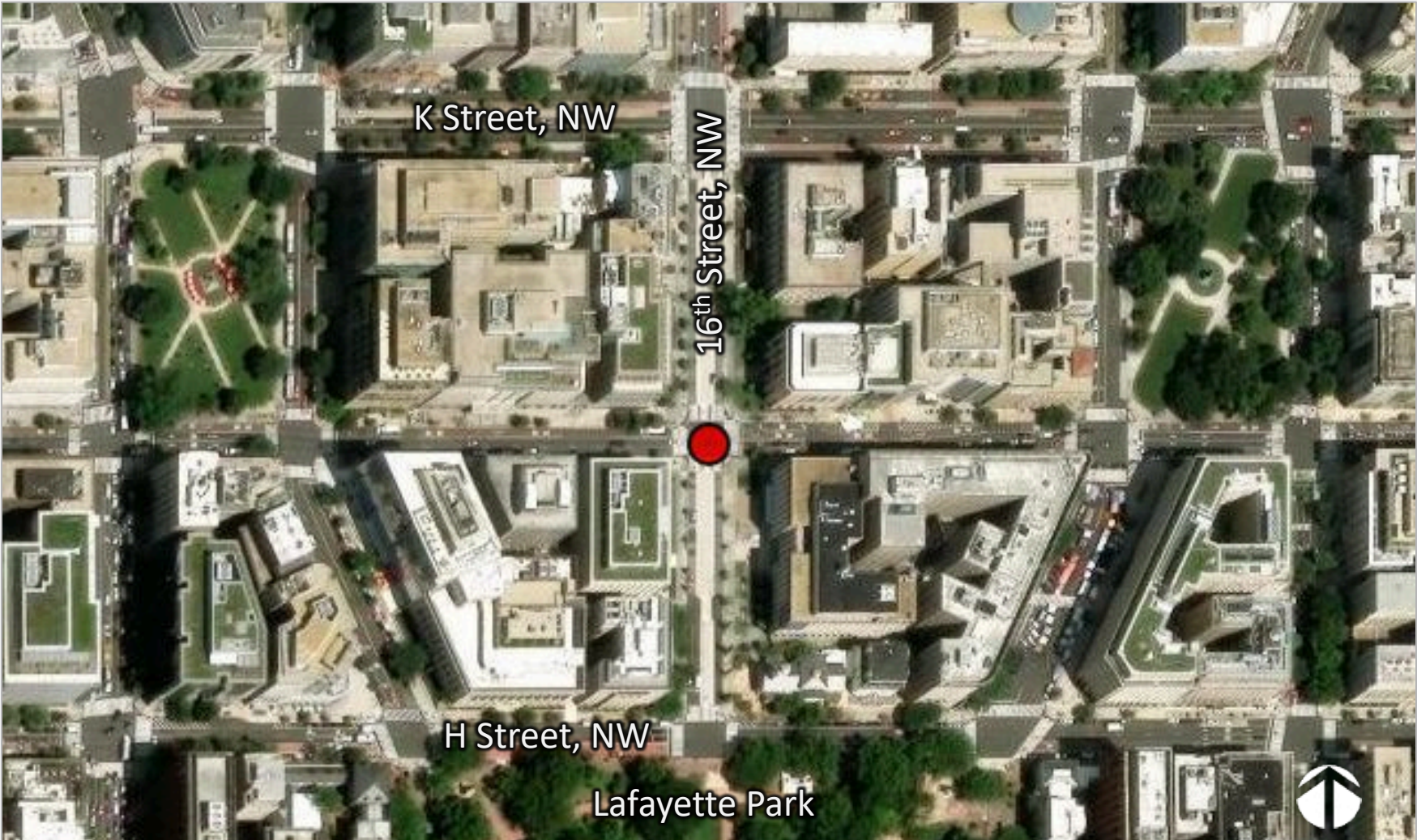
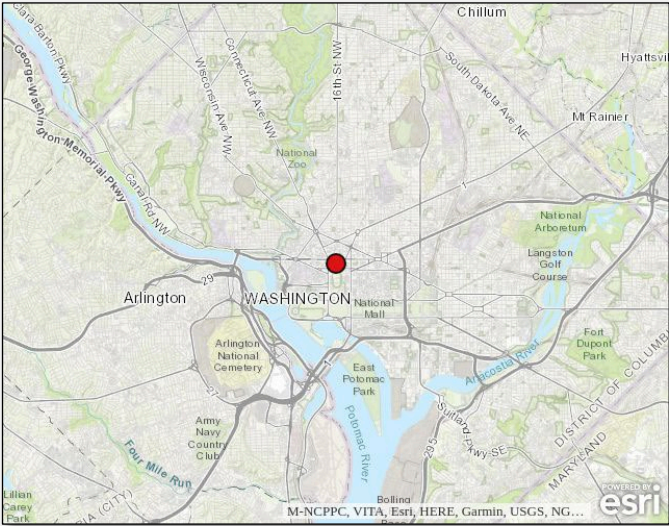
Project Summary:

The District Department of Transportation submitted preliminary and final site development plans for a streetscape beautification project. The project proposes installing raised planters within the central median on 16th Street, NW immediately north of Lafayette Park between H and K Streets. Four raised, 16-inch height landscaped medians would be installed within the District public right of way. The medians would be similar in size, color, and material to the existing median planters on Connecticut Avenue, NW between K Street and Dupont Circle.

The planted medians will measure 12 feet and 7 inches wide and will be constructed within the existing space between the existing curb stops and stone pavers located in the center of 16th Street. The alignment is centered on 16th Street to maintain symmetry of the street and reduce impacts to the existing roadway configuration. The existing granite pavers on either side of the central median will largely remain and serve as a shoulder for passing cars and an area for maintenance vehicles providing service to the median. At the southern-most segment of the median, the pavers on the east side will be removed to allow the median to be realigned with the center of the roadway and maintain the five 15 minute parking spaces located on 16th Street in front of the Hay-Adams Hotel.

The landscaped medians will be planted with both native and ornamental species to provide year-round interest. Dwarf *Prunus* 'Okame' trees that are proposed in the center of the median as a key feature and to assist with stormwater management. 16th Street, NW is a Radiating & Edging Street providing a preeminent viewshed and vista of the White House. The applicant conducted a viewshed study to understand the impacts of the proposed landscaped medians on the view. The study concluded that the proposed dwarf cherry trees do not impact the view of the White House from the travel lanes. The view is blocked from one vantage point at the center of the roadway at 16th and K Streets and provides less of an impact the further north one gets on 16th Street.

Site Location



Location Map

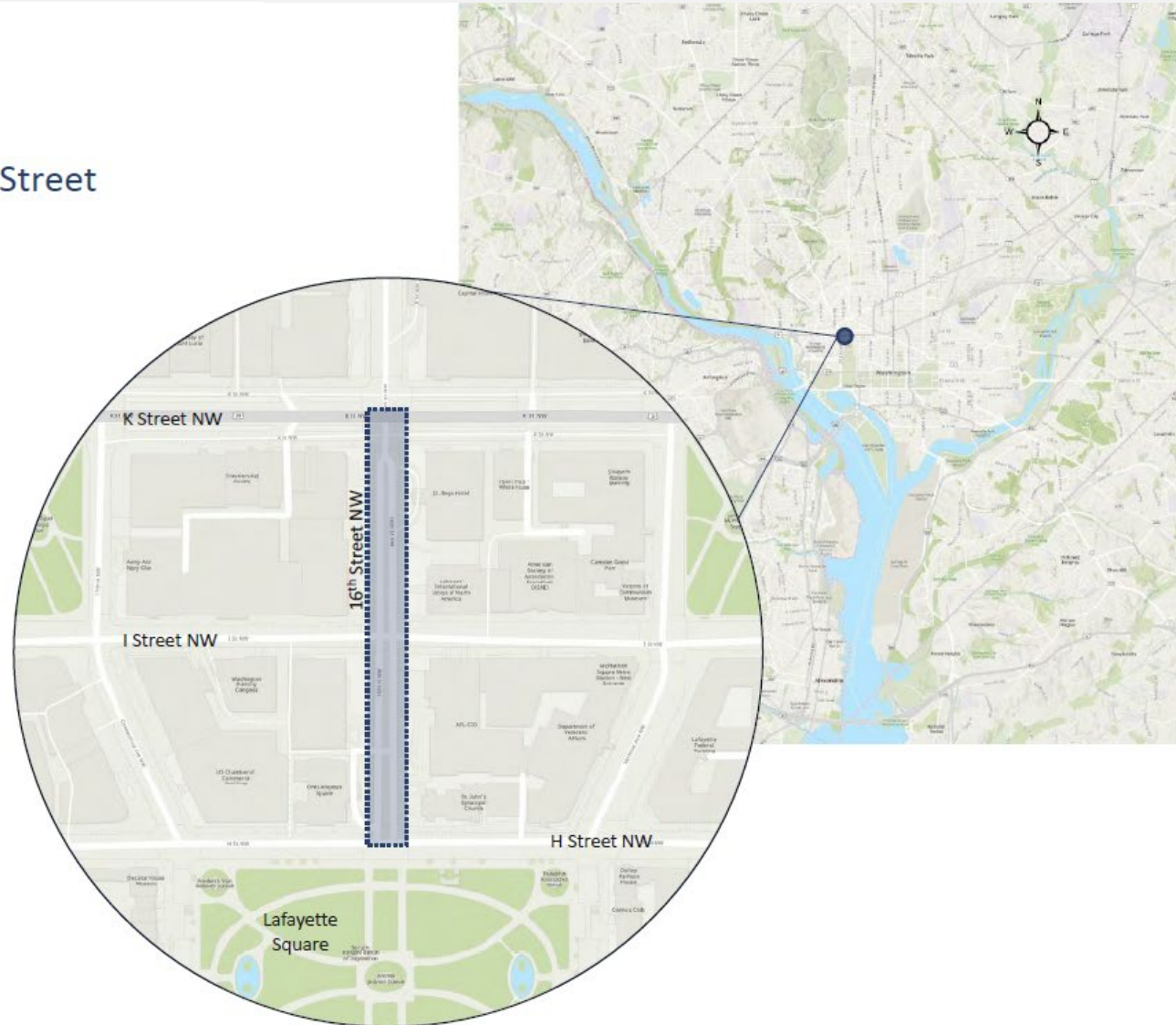
Project Overview

16th Street NW – Between H Street and K Street

This design is located on 16th Street NW between H and K Streets NW, directly north of Lafayette Square and was the former Black Lives Matter Plaza.

The project area is two blocks long and all within DC's public right of way, specifically along the centerline of the roadway.

As a beautification project, four raised landscaped medians will be installed. A colorful planting palette will enhance the beauty of the streetscape and provide a natural transition from Lafayette Square into DC's urban environment north of the White House.



Location History

The 16th Street corridor between Lafayette Square and K Street NW has undergone many changes throughout the years.

It was originally a through street with two travel lanes and two parking lanes. A painted median buffer in the early and mid-2000's separated travel directions.



2011



2017

In 2020, it became Black Lives Matter Plaza. The original mural was a pedestrian plaza with motor vehicle traffic blocked off. The mural was formalized and made permanent in late 2021 with the installation of a buffered median with bollards and granite pavers delineating the asphalt travel lanes.

In 2025, the mural was removed. The asphalt travel lanes, short term parking, granite pavers and median remained.



2024



2025

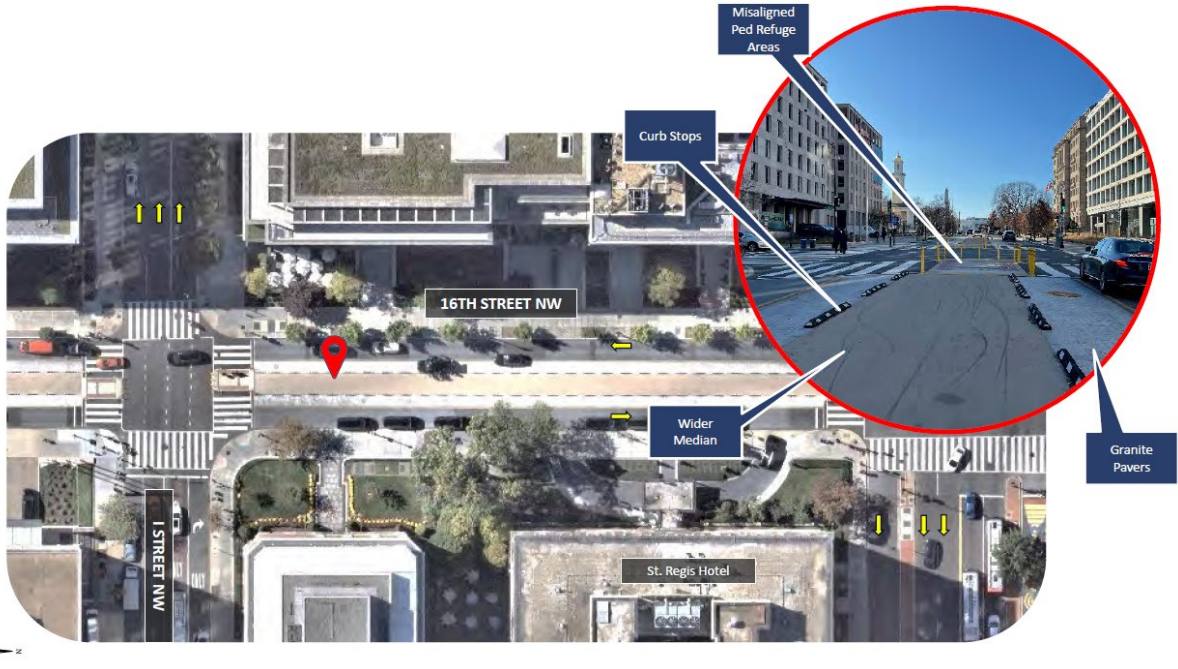
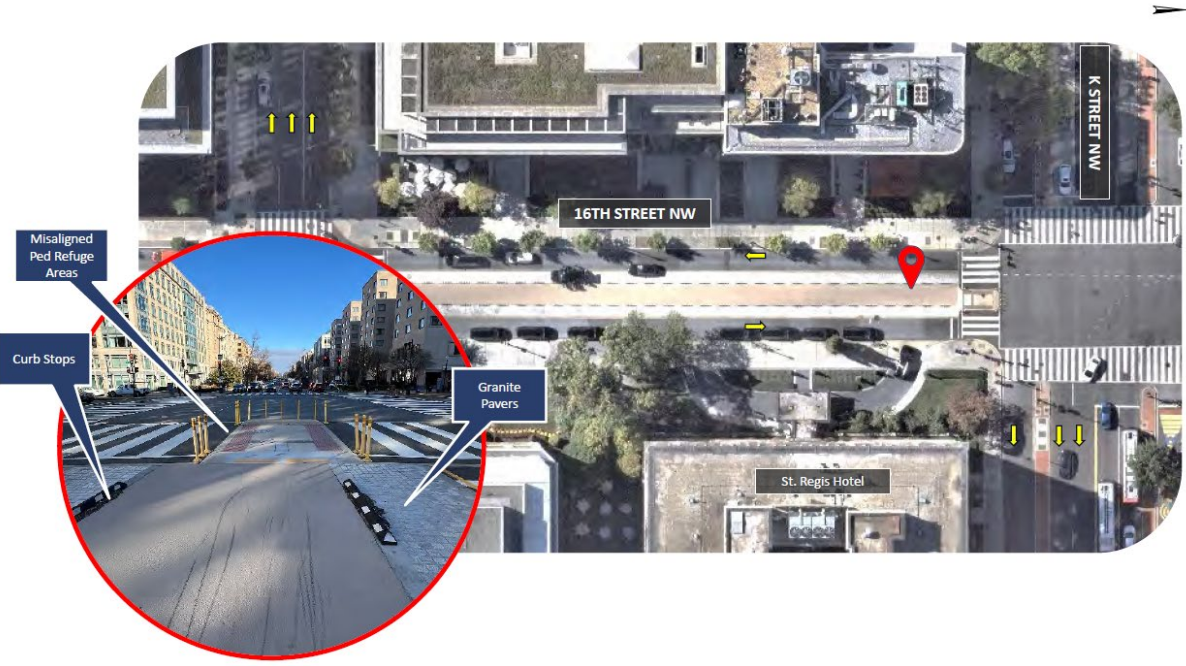
Existing Conditions – South Segment

South Segment – H Street to I Street NW



Existing Conditions – North Segment

North Segment – I Street to K Street NW



Basis of Design

Connecticut Avenue medians (between K St and Dupont Circle)

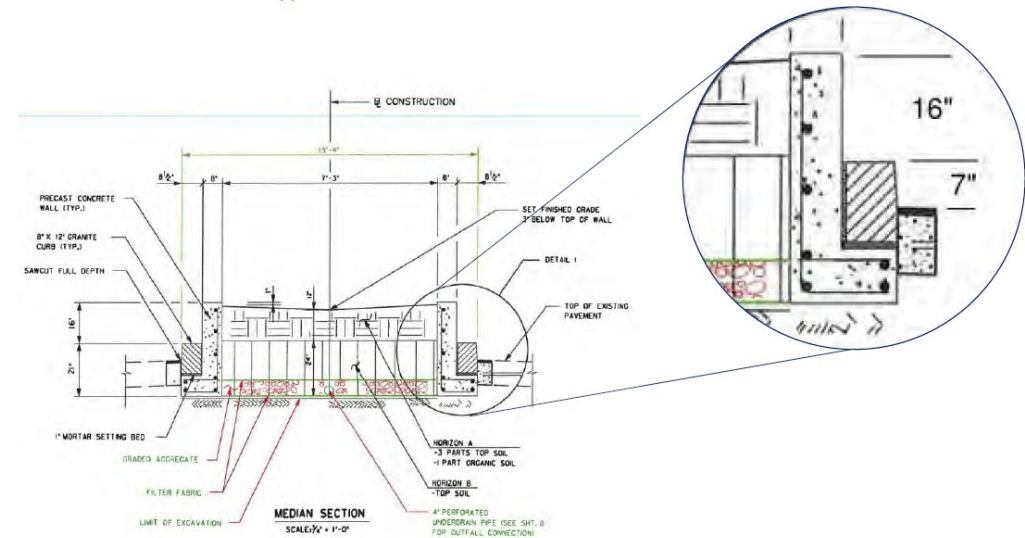


Ensuring the proposed design matches the surrounding context and support cohesion, DDOT will use the same pre-cast concrete wall as the Connecticut Avenue planted medians, which were designed in 2012 and installed shortly after. The Connecticut Avenue medians have been a great success in terms of beautification and material longevity.

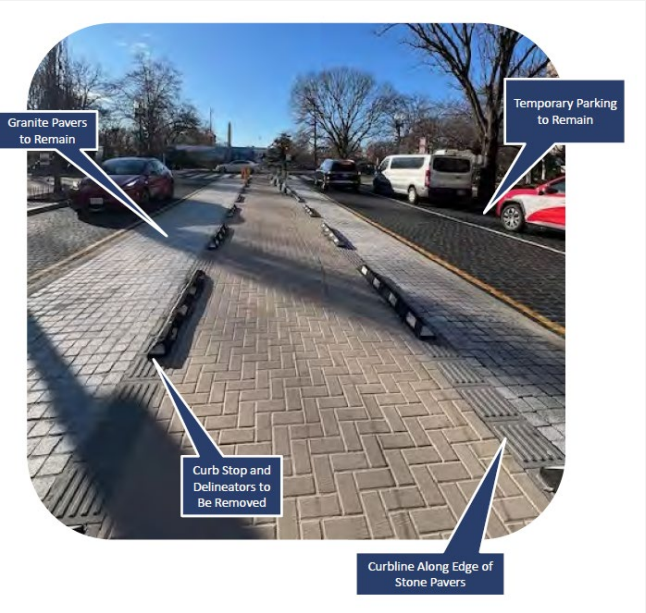
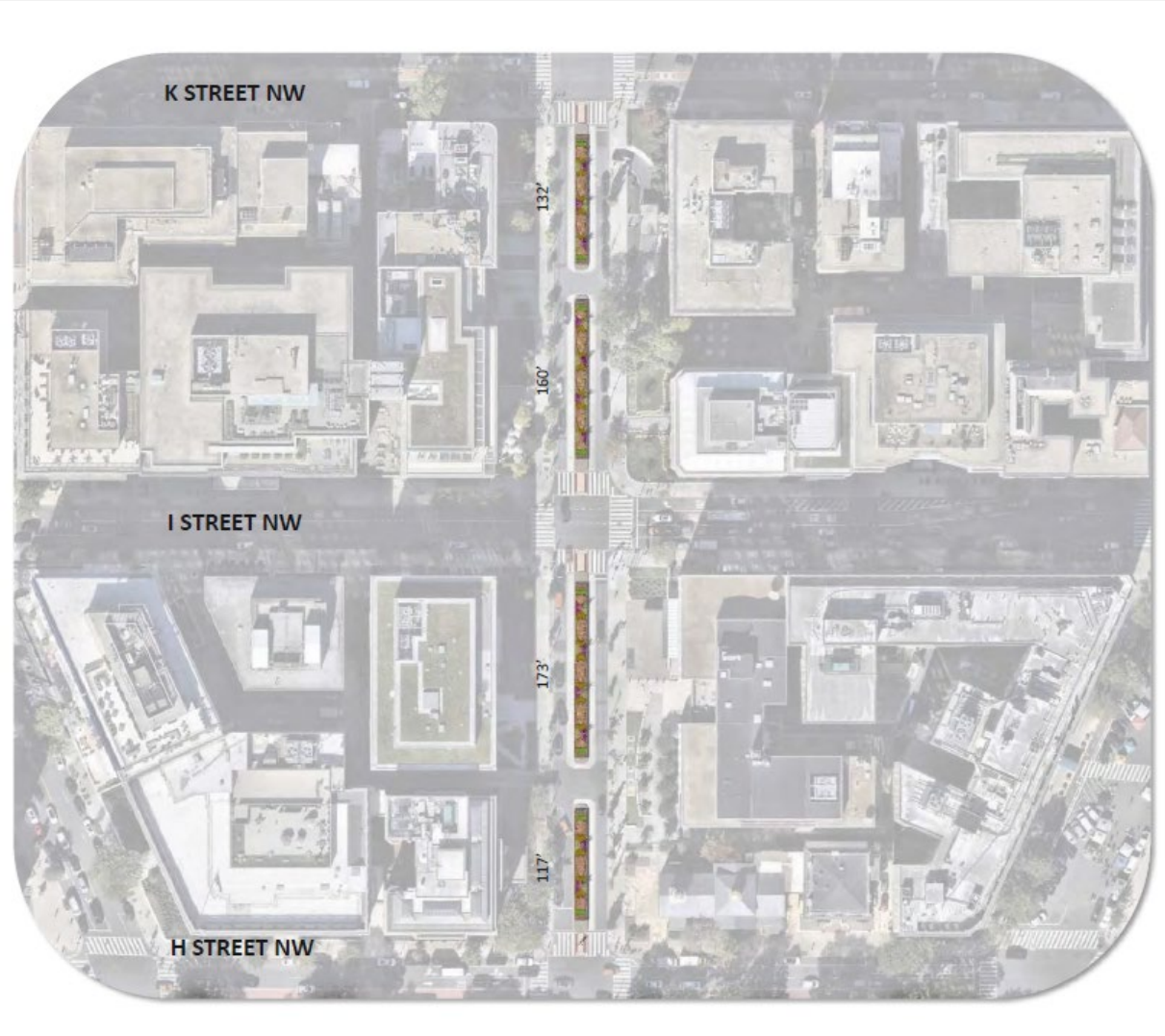
Other successful design features will be mimicked, such as the granite curb installed next to the precast concrete wall. The curb provides a buffer from vehicles and protects the wall. Setting the planters back from the intersection will increase visibility for motorists and prevents collisions with pedestrians and other motorists, further increasing safety for all roadway users and increases the lifespan of these planters.



Connecticut Avenue medians – Typical Section

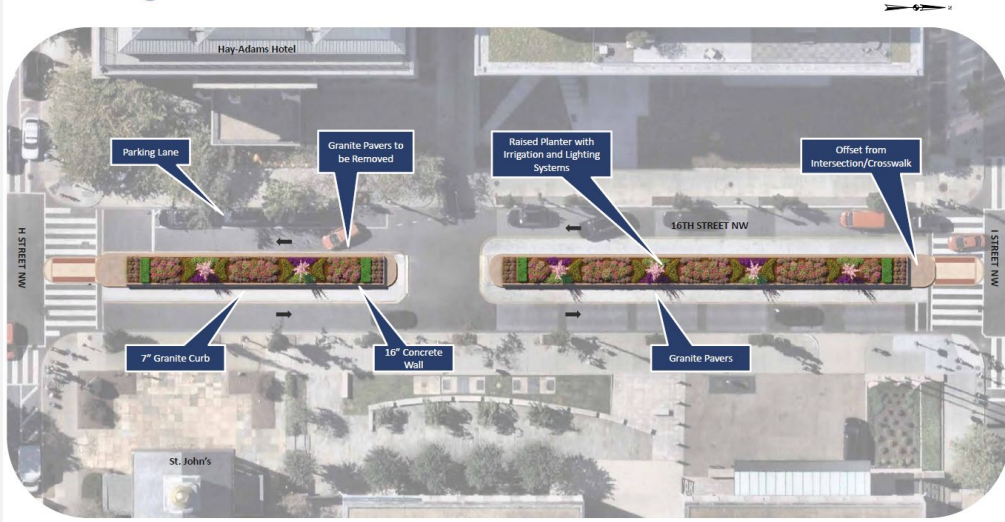


Proposed Design

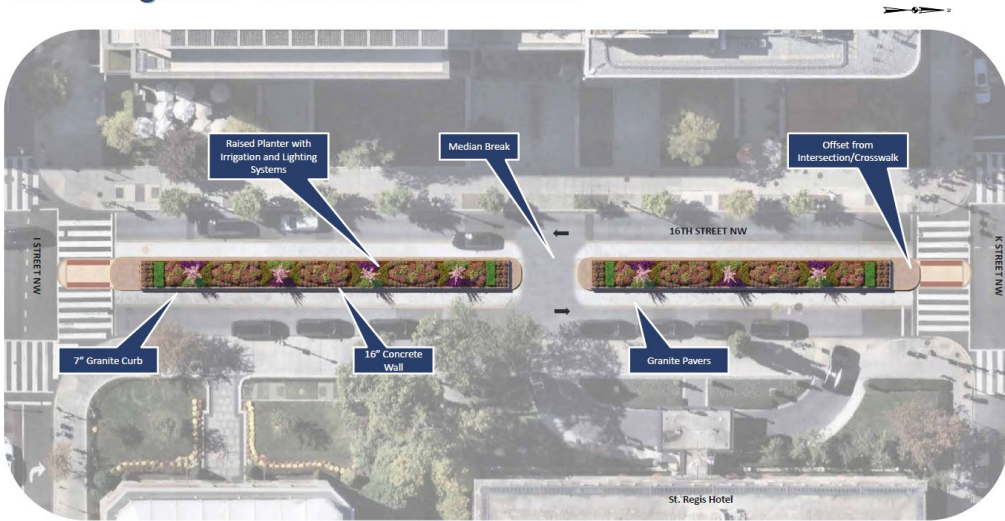


Proposed Design

South Segment – H Street to I Street NW



North Segment – I Street to K Street NW

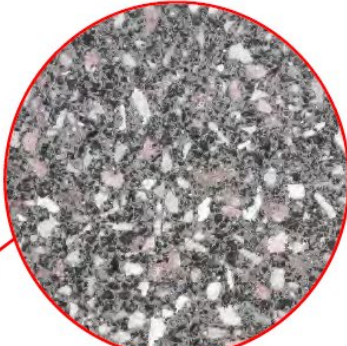
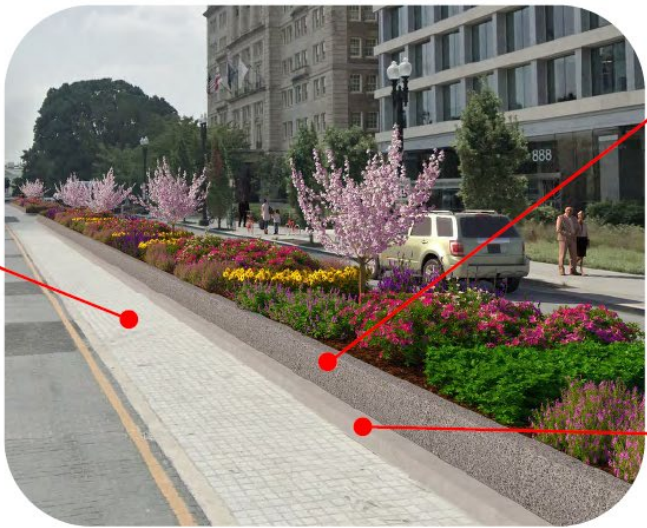


- 12-ft wide planted medians centered on 16th Street within the space between the existing curb stops and stone pavers
- Concrete planter walls will be 16-inches tall
- Curb stops will be removed and replaced with granite curb
- Existing granite pavers and asphalt travel lanes will largely remain unchanged
- The only change to granite paver extents will be to the southern most median to allow the planted median to be centered on the street and maintain the limited term parking spaces for the Hay-Adam's hotel

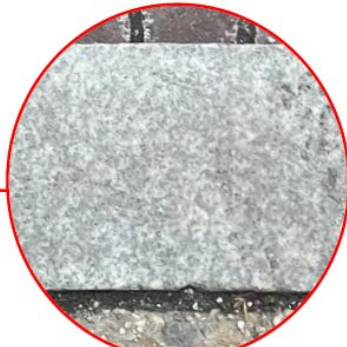
Proposed Materials & Landscape



Existing Granite Pavers
(to remain)



Concrete Wall – Stone Finish
(raised planters)



Granite Curb
(Medians)



CATMINT
Nepeta racemosa



KNOCK OUT ROSES
Rosa 'Radyod'



JAPANESE HOLLY
Ilex crenata 'Helleri'



CARDONNA MEADOW SAGE
Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna'



DWARF FLOWERING CHERRY
Prunus 'Okame'



LITTLE BLUESTEM
Schizachyrium scoparium



EASTERN BLUESTAR
Amsonia tabernaemontana



DWARF LOROPETALUM
Loropetalum 'Purple Daydream'



BLACK-EYED SUSAN
Rudbeckia hirta

White House Viewshed Study

A viewshed study was conducted to understand the impact the proposed dwarf cherry blossom trees will have on seeing the White House on 16th Street.

The study was conducted from K Street NW, the proposed use of dwarf cherry blossom trees at maturity (10' tall, 12' including the planter box) do not impact the view of the White House from the travel lanes.

The dwarf cherry blossom trees do, however, block the view of the White House from the center of the roadway on K Street NW. The further north on 16th Street, the less the trees impact the White House viewshed.

Comments were given to DDOT on February 9, 2026 to consider grouping the cherry trees. Unfortunately, there is not adequate soil volume to accommodate grouping cherry trees and it would increase the impact to the view of the White House.



White House Viewshed Study



The White House is seen from the travel lane.



The White House is not seen from the center of the roadway at K Street NW.