Pennsylvania Avenue Plan – Design Submission

NCPC Preliminary Review

December 3, 2026



Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

-- Updated 11/16/2026 --

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION
Project Timeline 4
Project Brief 5-7
Public Comments Summary 8
Agency Coordination and Regulatory Review 9

PLAN OVERVIEW
Plan Vision 11
Plan Objectives 12

EXISTING CONDITIONS, HISTORY, & CONTEXT
History Brief Overview 14
Existing Site Conditions 15
Other Planning Efforts 16
Context Maps and Diagrams 17-26
Potential Redevelopment Sites 27

DESIGN FRAMEWORK
Bolster the Symbolic Relationships of the L'Enfant Plan 29
Civic Linkages 20
Cultural Uses and Opportunities 31
Active Building Uses and Educational / Cultural Frontages 32
Street Character 33
Land Use Opportunities 34
Pedestrian and Cycling Network 35
Transit Access and Hubs 36
Events Opportunities and Infrastructure 37

CORRIDOR (3RD STREET TO 13TH STREET) 38
Overview 39
Existing Conditions 40
A Framed View of the Capitol for all Users 41-42
Rightsizing the Avenue 43
Blocks Vary in Size 44
Planting Strategy 45
Utilities and Underground Infrastructure 46
Accommodating the Inaugural Parade 47-48
Ceremonies and Demonstrations on the Avenue 49
Events 50-51
Summary of Elements 52-54

MAJOR PUBLIC SPACES 55
Overview 56

WESTERN END 57
Overview 58
Existing Plan 59
Proposed Site Plan 60
L'Enfant Legacy & Democracy Manifest 61
Inaugural Parade 62
Vehicle and Bike Circulation 63
Memorials and Monuments 64
Events and Activation 65

MARKET SQUARE CROSSROADS 66
Overview 67
Existing Plan 68
Proposed Site Plan 69
L'Enfant Legacy 70
Inaugural Parade 71
Vehicle and Bike Circulation 72
Memorials and Monuments 73
Events and Activation: "Gateway to Downtown" 74-76

EASTERN END 77
Overview 78
Existing Plan 79
Proposed Site Plan 80
L'Enfant Legacy 81
Inaugural Parade 82
Vehicle and Bike Circulation 83
Memorials and Monuments 84
Events and Activation: "Gateway to Downtown" 85

PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION
Additional Documents Available 86
Phasing & Implementation 87

OVERALL PROPOSED PLAN 89

DESIGN TEAM

Land DAVID RUBIN Collective · BEYER BLINDER BELLE · vhb · Rhodes Heritage Group · s:i studio:indigenous · brandespartners &Access · ARTICHOKE WAYSIDE · Thornton Tomasetti · JaffeHolden studiopacifica (With HB/a+p & StudioTM) · Domingo González Associates Architectural Lighting Design · ETM ASSOCIATES, L.L.C. PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN PROJECT MANAGEMENT · DHARAM CONSULTING

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

HR&A with Field Operations, Auster Agency, and ArentFox Schiff

INTRODUCTION

Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

Project Timeline

PRIOR TO 2024
NCPC and the Project Partners acknowledged the challenges leading to the physical decline of this portion of Pennsylvania Avenue. Vision concepts were crafted and a formal partnership was formed to launch this plan.

10.03.2024
Development of the Public Space Master Plan begins, building from the 2022 Vision Concepts, public comments, working groups, and stakeholder meetings.

06.05.2025
NCPC Information Presentation

01.28.2026
S106 Consulting Parties Meeting #1

02.05.2026
NCPC Information Presentation

03.31.2026
NEPA Public Scoping Initiated

04.02.2026
NCPC Concept Review

04.16.2026
CFA Information Presentation

APRIL 2026
Public Comment Period

04.29.2026
S106 Consulting Parties Meeting #2

08.26.2026
S106 Consulting Parties Meeting #3

11.30.2026
NEPA EA Issued

12.03.2026
NCPC Preliminary Review

DEC. 2026 / JAN. 2027
Public Comment Period

EARLY 2027
Future CFA and NCPC Reviews

TBD
Future S106 Consulting Parties Coordination

SPRING 2027
Anticipated Plan Completion

Refer to Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative project page (https://www.ncpc.gov/initiatives/pennave/) for an expanded timeline, including the 2022 Vision Concepts and 1974 Plan.

The Public Space Master Plan is being developed in coordination with the Implementation Program and is complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 (S106).

NCPC – National Capital Planning Commission CFA – U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

Project Brief

INTRODUCTION

Pennsylvania Avenue is the nation's most iconic ceremonial boulevard and one of the most prominent places in Washington where federal and District interests intersect. Envisioned in the 1970s as "America's Main Street," the Avenue now requires thoughtful modernization to fulfill that promise. Its infrastructure is aging and its physical condition is declining. The guiding 1974 plan no longer reflects current development or public space needs; and evolving economic, social, and security conditions have affected the Avenue's function, character, and vitality. The Pennsylvania Avenue Plan (the Plan) strengthens Pennsylvania Avenue's role as a unifying symbol of the nation's civic life. The Plan includes seven parts, which will guide future growth and development along Pennsylvania Avenue. As a place where Americans gather to commemorate national milestones, exercise their constitutional rights, and welcome visitors from around the world, the Avenue can once again serve as a vibrant setting for civic life, commerce, culture, and community.

The Pennsylvania Avenue Plan was commissioned by the project partners with NCPC acting as the lead agency. Project partnership includes federal and District agency representation. Federal and local leaders share a commitment to revitalizing this corridor as a premier destination that honors its historic significance while meeting the needs of the 21st century. See the Plan Area on the following page.

THE AVENUE AS A DAILY DESTINATION AND A CIVIC VENUE

In developing a framework for this project, a simple idea emerged: people experience public space before they think about what it means. The power of the Avenue is expressed not only through its iconic viewshed, institutions, inspiring architecture, and monuments, but also by the way it makes people feel seen (through inclusive design, public art, and cultural references), connected (by creating reasons for people to gather), and present (by giving people reasons to slow down and notice where they are). Here, design is an invitation. Every choice should honor the enduring relationship between people, place, and participation.

This layering together of ideals leads to a beautiful, robust, and enriching urban experience as appropriate for everyday life, as it is for celebration, as it is for civic engagement. Pennsylvania Avenue is where Americans, residents, and visitors uplift each other to live, act, and gather. The future vision for Pennsylvania Avenue goes beyond addressing the needs of any single user group. Instead, it embraces a design-for-all approach.

Additionally, the Avenue has served as the stage for a multitude of events that celebrate our Nation and the District in moments of joy and mourning. The primary framed viewshed of the U.S. Capitol Building and the secondary framed views of other federal buildings like the National Archives, National Gallery of Art, and the Portrait Gallery, create iconic backdrops for concerts, festivals, parades, marathons, and demonstrations alike. Temporary events and festivals within the urban cityscape create opportunities for jubilant interaction and new ways to occupy public spaces.

However, the complex layering of management and operational jurisdictions resulting from the dissolution of the PADC has prevented events from feeling seamless across the public realm, sidewalk, and vehicular cartway. Existing events on the Avenue itself have often suffered from intense sun exposure and heat radiating from the asphalt. Permanent elements in the existing cartway such as rubberized bike lane dividers, traffic signals, and other vertical elements create barriers and trip hazards during events, frequently causing injuries to event attendees. Additionally, the outdated infrastructure and utilities along the Avenue corridor are often not sufficient to support current event standards. Temporary elements (bathrooms, security, telecom, wastewater hookups, electricity, etc.) can be costly and time consuming to set up for smaller and medium sized events. To increase event quality, quantity, and scale, these issues must be addressed.

This Plan aims to solve those event challenges, creating a spectacular and efficient civic venue in addition to creating an Avenue that is attractive as a daily destination

DESIGN UPDATES & PROCESS SINCE CONCEPT REVIEW IN APRIL 2026

The Plan was reviewed by NCPC and CFA in April. At that time, the Commissions and the public reviewed multiple alternatives and design options for the Corridor and for the three major public spaces:

- **Two Alternatives for the corridor from 3rd St NW to 13th St NW, from building face to building face —** There was a Base Alternative and a Poles Alternative, where the Poles Alternative added symbolic and functional poles to the Base Alternative layout. Within these Alternatives, two Options were included that focus on differing tree strategies. **The Base Alternative with a hybrid tree strategy was selected as preferred based on Commission comments, technical requirements, and public review.**

- **Two Alternatives for the Western End Public Space —** Two Alternatives (and four Options) were considered, including approaches where the Avenue is returned to its original alignment and approaches where the Avenue diverts around a central public space. **The "Central Plaza" approach was selected as preferred based on Commission comments, technical requirements, and public review.**

- **One Alternative for the Market Square Crossroads Public Space —** Within this Alternative, two Options were included that focus on the balance between civic and neighborhood programming and hardscape to planted areas. **A hybrid of the two Options was selected as preferred based on Commission comments, technical requirements, and public review.**

- **One Alternative for the Eastern End Public Space —** Within this Alternative, three Options were included that focus on differing site elements and grading strategies to support ongoing and future events and daily use. **The "Hillside Pavilion" Option was selected as preferred based on Commission comments, technical requirements, and public review.**

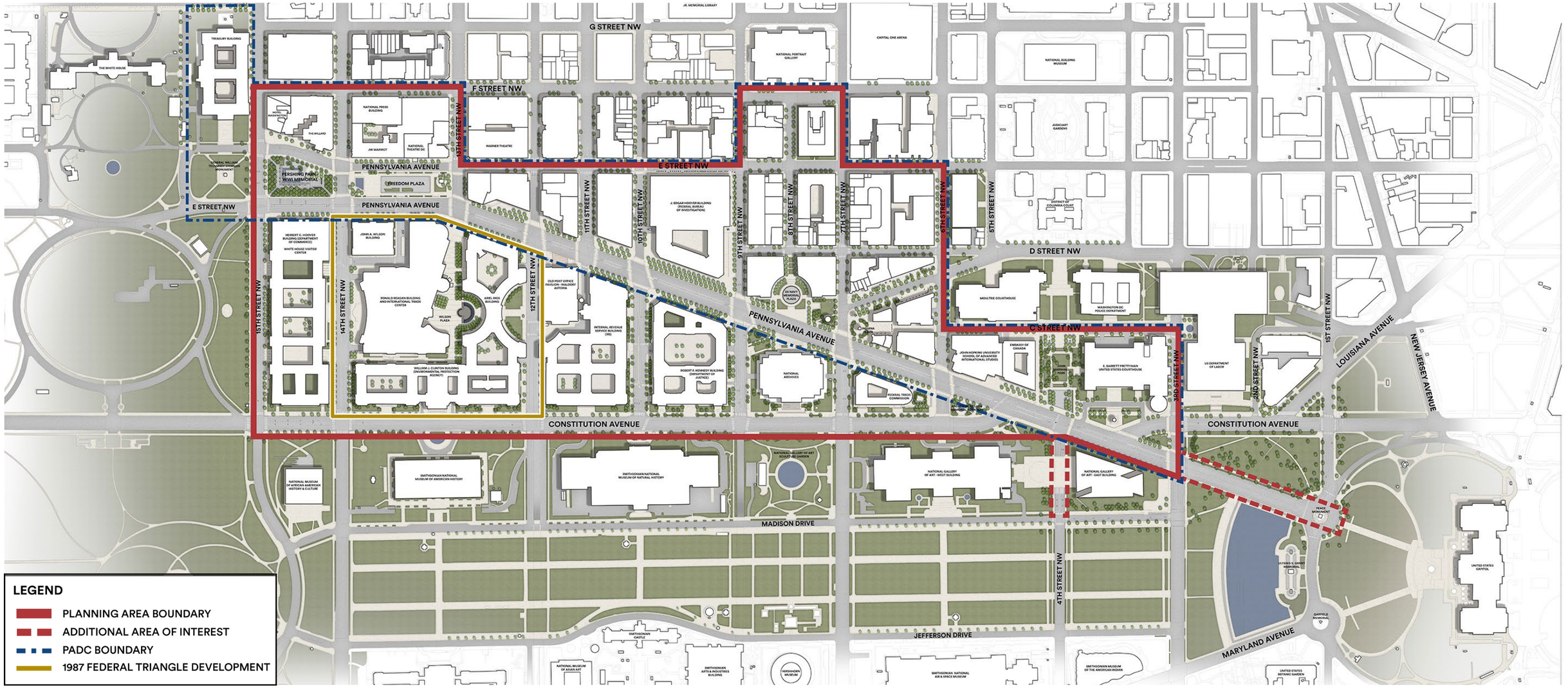
Supporting materials, including the Environmental Assessment, submitted separately will be available for public review in December 2026 and January 2027.

Project Brief (continued)

PLAN AREA

The plan area consists primarily of the 1.2-mile segment of Pennsylvania Avenue NW between the White House and the U.S. Capitol Building. The plan area closely reflects the PADC 1974 boundary, including the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor from 3rd Street NW to 15th Street NW and streets north of the Avenue to E / F Street NW. The boundary has been expanded to include portions of Federal Triangle to Constitution Avenue NW. The plan area is approximately 177 acres in size and includes the corridor as well as specific areas and memorials such as: Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site, Federal Triangle, Freedom Plaza, John Marshall Park, Market Square, Mellon Fountain, National Archives, National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park, Old Post Office Building, US Navy Memorial, and Wilson Building.

Although beyond the scope of this Plan, two secondary areas of influence were included within the design-thinking. These areas include Pennsylvania Avenue east of 3rd Street NW to the Peace Circle within the Architect of the Capitol grounds and the portion of 4th Street NW between Pennsylvania Avenue and Madison Drive on the National Mall. These areas, although not within the official boundary of this Plan, remain an important part of the larger urban ecosystem of the Capital City. Pennsylvania Avenue east of 3rd Street NW to the Peace Circle provides the opportunity to further frame the Capitol viewshed and 4th Street NW is a key viewshed within the Eastern End public space.



Project Brief (continued)

PROJECT PARTNERS

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION (NCPC)
The National Capital Planning Commission is the central federal planning agency and works with federal agencies as it seeks to preserve and enhance the extraordinary historical, cultural, and natural resources and federal assets of the National Capital Region to support the needs of the federal government and enrich the lives of the region's visitors, workers, and residents.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)
The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA)
The General Services Administration is charged with delivering the best customer experience and value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to the government and the American people.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (REPRESENTED BY DMPED)
The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) assists the Mayor in the coordination, planning, supervision, and execution of economic development efforts in the District of Columbia with the goal of creating and preserving affordable housing, creating jobs, and increasing tax revenue. DMPED pursues policies and programs that create strong neighborhoods, expand and diversify the local economy, and provide residents with pathways to the middle class.

Representing the Mayor's Office, DMPED is leading DC in the partnership and is coordinating with other District agencies, including the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the DC Office of Planning (DC OP), and others for this process.

DOWNTOWNDC BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)
The DowntownDC BID convenes business, community, and government to compassionately lead a clean, safe, and vibrant district. The BID was founded in 1997 as the city's first private nonprofit place management organization where property owners agree to tax themselves to fund services that enhance people's experiences in the downtown area. The BID's area includes over 530 properties and is defined by Massachusetts Avenue on the north, including the Water E. Washington Convention Center at Mount Vernon Square, to Constitution Avenue on the south, and from Louisiana Avenue on the east to 16th Street on the west.

EVENTS DC
Events DC, the official convention and sports authority of Washington, DC, delivers premier event services and flexible venues across the nation's capital. Leveraging the power of a world-class destination and creating amazing attendee experiences, Events DC generates economic and community benefits through the attraction and promotion of business, athletic, entertainment and cultural activities.

Coordinating Review Agency:

U.S. COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS (CFA)
The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts is an independent federal agency charged with giving expert advice to the President, the Congress, and the federal and District of Columbia governments on matters of design and aesthetics, as they affect the federal interest and preserve the dignity of the nation's capital. The Commission is composed of seven presidentially appointed experts in relevant disciplines including art, architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design.

Public Comment Summary

OVERVIEW

Building on public input from early planning stages, NCPC held an extended public comment period on the concept designs that began on March 31, 2026 and ended April 30, 2026. A catalogue of all previous comments received from this period can be found at https://www.ncpc.gov/initiatives/pennave/. Multiple methods of engagement were used to solicit feedback including online webinars and surveys, community meetings, property owners open houses, site walks, letters received from interested organizations, tabling events (such as the State of Downtown event), and a weeks-long exhibition at the City Action Hall at the National Building Museum.

Main Takeaways and Summary of What We Heard

Since the public comment period was held during the concept stage of design, the team intentionally designed most of the engagement activities not to focus heavily on choosing between design options, but rather to better understand what community members want to prioritize on the Avenue (its qualities, programming, amenities, etc.) and what they want to see and experience, regardless of which design option was eventually selected. Across all means of engagement, certain priorities continuously rose to the top:

Shade

"Need shade. It is hot."
"Larger sidewalks with shade."
"Shade and calm."

Places to Sit/Rest

"Spots to sit and eat."
"...Shaded and ventilated seating."
"Seating (preferably a variety including benches, chairs, tables and a grassy lawn where people can gather and relax.)"

Public Restrooms and Water Stations

"Free public restrooms."
"Clean public family restrooms."
"Drinking fountain and public restrooms."

Planted Spaces

"Bio-diversity."
"Plants / Trees are always comforting, especially in D.C. summer."
"More green spaces; trees, nature, etc."

Pedestrian and Bike-Friendly Streets

"Wide pedestrian friendly sidewalk."
"Keep bike lanes separate/protected."
"I like bike lanes and an expanded sidewalk."

Affordable Food Options

"Affordable food options with covered outdoor seating."
"Would be great to provide space for food kiosks."
"Diverse food options."

Each of these priorities already aligned with all design alternatives but aided the team in understanding which design elements to prioritize when selecting preferred design options to carry forward to the agencies with oversight. Additionally, detailed letters and comments were received and informed Project Partner decisions.












Agency Coordination and Regulatory Review

The Plan and design were submitted to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and National Capital Planning Commission for comment throughout the planning process, with anticipated approval of both in early 2027. Comments from both commissions were incorporated.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

- April 16, 2026: Information Presentation
- Early 2027 (anticipated)

National Capital Planning Commission

- June 5, 2025: Information Presentation
- February 5, 2026: Information Presentation
- April 2, 2026: Concept Review
- **December 3, 2026: Preliminary Review**
- Early 2027 (anticipated)

Public Review

- March 31 – April 30, 2026: Public Review
- April 2026: Exhibition at the National Building Museum's City Action Hall
- April 8, 2026: Virtual Webinar
- April 22, 2026: Virtual Webinar
- **December 2026 – January 15, 2027: Public Review**

The Design Team meets bi-weekly with subject matter experts from each of the six Project Partners and the coordinating review agency to support the ongoing needs and desires to fulfill each organization's mission. Additionally the design team facilitated additional coordination with institutions adjacent to the Avenue, other ongoing planning initiatives, security agencies, events permitting groups, and operations specialists, among many others.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), NCPC has developed an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate whether the Plan would have reasonably foreseeable significant effects on the quality of the human environment. Consistent with the criteria defined in NEPA § 107(a)(1)(A), 42 USC § 4336a(a)(1)(A), NCPC is the lead agency for the Project. NPS and GSA have agreed to be cooperating agencies. The same NEPA document will be used by the lead and cooperating agencies for their individual decision-making purposes as provided for in NEPA § 107(a)(1)(B), 42 USC § 4336a(a)(1)(B). It is anticipated that the EA will be available for public review from November 30, 2026 to January 25, 2027. Based on the analysis documented in the EA, NCPC intends to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which will conclude the NEPA process.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT, SECTION 106

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 U.S.C. § 306108), all federal agencies must take into account the effects of their undertaking on historic properties. The process adheres to the implementation regulations detailed in 36 CFR Part 800 and is overseen by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). In accordance with 36 CFR Part 800, as lead agency for the undertaking, NCPC initiated the Section 106 process with SHPO on September 25, 2025, invited the ACHP and consulting parties to participate, identified historic properties within an area of potential effect, and developed an assessment of effects. NCPC has determined that adverse effects would occur. Since the undertaking is a master plan, which proposes designs at a concept level, NCPC and its project partners will prepare a PA to establish a process for ongoing consultation and review as the level of design progresses and the Plan is finalized.

PLAN OVERVIEW

Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

Plan Vision

WHERE AMERICA UNITES.

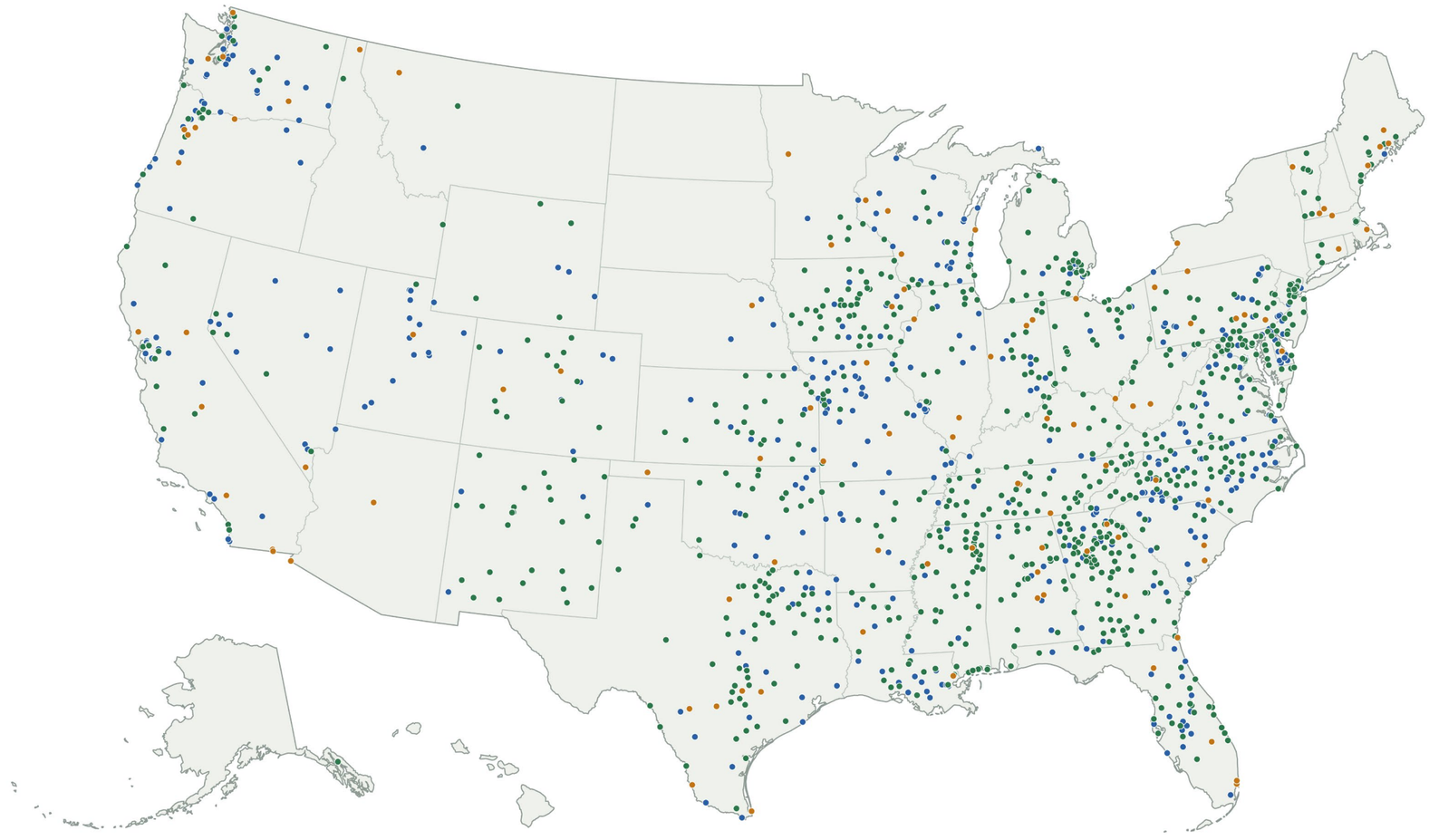
Pennsylvania Avenue can fulfill its promise as America's Main Street—a world-class civic boulevard that brings Americans together through extraordinary public spaces, everyday experiences, and spectacular events. A place to enjoy city life in the District of Columbia, honor America's past, celebrate achievements, and renew aspirations, embodying the enduring spirit of the nation and the city to inspire pride and confidence in our collective future.

Main Streets in small towns and large cities across the United States are the center of social connection, economic progress, and civic leadership. Communities are strengthened by these urban centers, and increasingly Americans are reinvesting in our Main Streets to build strength and vibrancy alongside our neighbors.

Pennsylvania Avenue in our nation's capital serves this same function at a national scale, to create a place where we can come together to march, honor, celebrate, and gather.



Image Credit: Ted Eytan, Creative Commons, Washington Nationals World Series Victory Parade



Map: The 1,382 communities in the Main Street America network: 844 Accredited (green), 436 Affiliate (blue), and 102 MSA Partner Program locations (orange), shown across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (Credit: https://mainstreet.org/our-network/main-street-communities)

Plan Objectives

Below are the Plan's objectives to support the vision and direct the growth and development of the Avenue into the future. The objectives will serve as an ongoing evaluation tool to inform implementation of the Plan recommendations.

Create a beautiful and welcoming place

Design and maintain Pennsylvania Avenue as a beautiful and welcoming place for all Americans and visitors.

Strengthen the Avenue as a civic venue

Celebrate Pennsylvania Avenue and its public spaces as a setting for demonstrations, collective expression, ceremonies, celebrations, and events of all scales, including the Inaugural Parade.

Celebrate the Avenue's symbolic role

Reinforce Pennsylvania Avenue's unique role as both a physical and symbolic connection between the White House and the U.S. Capitol and as a bridge between the federal core and downtown Washington, D.C.

Enhance multimodal connections

Accommodate a range of transportation modes while prioritizing safe, convenient, and equitable access to the Avenue.

Modernize infrastructure for flexibility

Modernize aging infrastructure through a seamless and integrated approach that enhances the Avenue's functionality, resilience, and adaptability.

Establish efficient management and operations

Simplify regulatory and management policies to support coordinated, efficient, and sustainable stewardship of Pennsylvania Avenue.

EXISTING CONDITIONS, HISTORY, & CONTEXT

Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

History Brief Overview

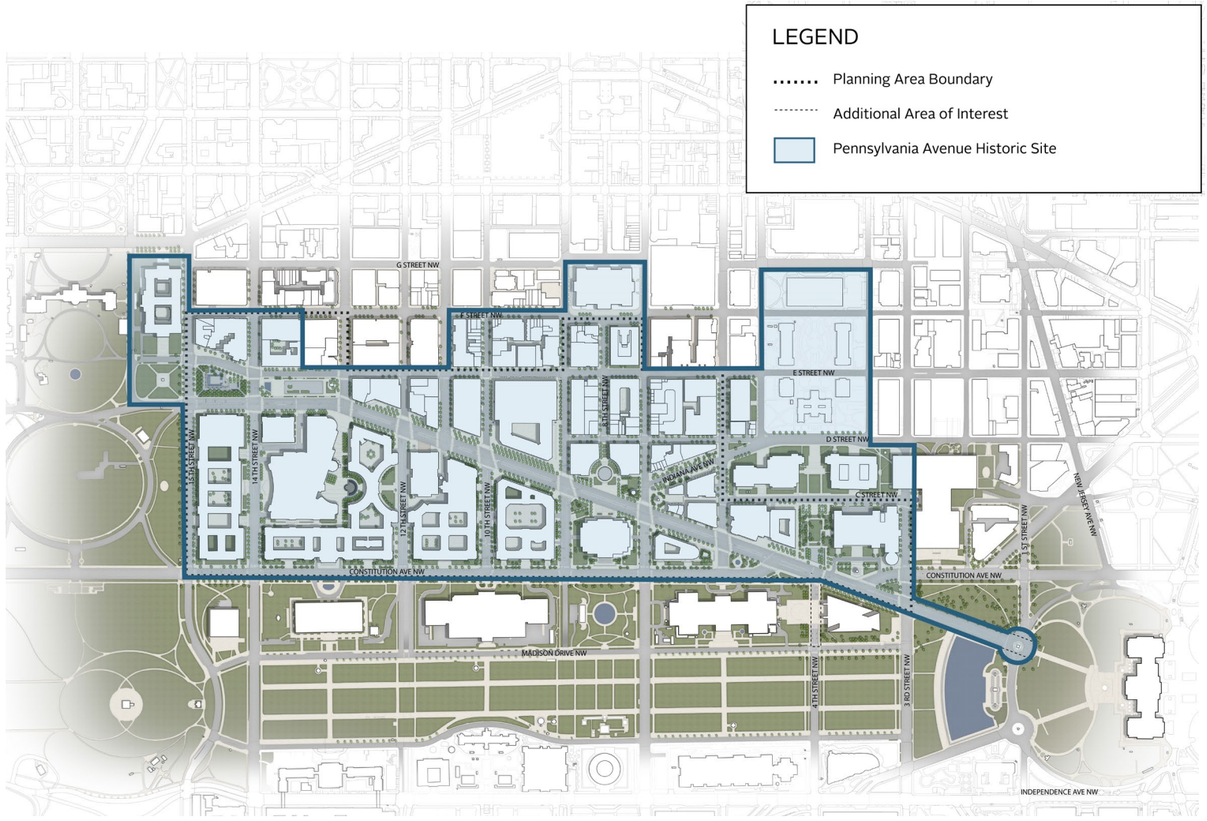
Throughout its history, Pennsylvania Avenue has held an elevated place of importance to the development and identity of Washington, D.C., and the nation as a place of connection, ceremony, and daily life. The plan for Washington, first drawn by L'Enfant in 1791 and refined and implemented by Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, envisioned government buildings embedded throughout the city, with Pennsylvania Avenue acting as a grand thoroughfare physically linking the White House and U.S. Capitol and symbolizing the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government.

For over 100 years, the Avenue developed as a focal point of commerce, hospitality, and entertainment. Improved infrastructure, methods of transportation, public amenities and public spaces created a bustling downtown, attracting every walk of citizen, statesmen, and visitor alike. The inaugural parade tradition began in 1805, evolving from an unplanned gathering to a highly orchestrated event. Somber moments of national unity and reflection also occurred, beginning with a state funeral procession for President Lincoln in 1865. The Avenue became an important venue for peaceful exercise of first amendment rights, starting with the march for women's suffrage in 1913, and continuing to the present day.

Beginning in 1901, the McMillan Plan guided efforts to reshape the city's appearance and conform to ideals of the City Beautiful movement, resulting in the development of Federal Triangle on the south side of the Avenue, which separated the grand federal buildings from the rest of the city. After decades of decline, the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) was established in 1972 to revitalize the Avenue, though it continued to be characterized by government buildings to the south and privately-owned buildings with new open public spaces to the north.

The PADC sought to revitalize the Avenue through redevelopment, public space improvements, and administration. The PADC oversaw the development and implementation of the 1974 Plan, the basis for the Avenue's redevelopment and for more than 40 years that created the Avenue's design and character that we know today. As a single steward, the PADC was able to efficiently create a cohesive streetscape character and balance federal and District desires. The plan was an important catalyst for the rebirth of downtown Washington in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Pennsylvania Avenue is a site of national historic, cultural, and social significance. The Avenue expresses the intersection of localized city life and governance, encapsulating themes of planning, architecture, landscape architecture, art, commerce, government, military, and social history along its length and breadth. It contains countless histories of generations of Americans from all backgrounds.



Map of Pennsylvania Avenue and its environs. The boundary of the Pennsylvania Avenue Historic Site is illustrated in blue.



Poplar trees planted in 1803 flanked Pennsylvania Avenue until they were replaced with elms in 1839 (Library of Congress, 1834)

Existing Site Conditions

The existing streetscape of Pennsylvania Avenue has become outdated and no longer looks or functions as a premier destination. Although it is the capital's most iconic street, the use, function, and character of Pennsylvania Avenue has changed. It is no longer a cross-town thoroughfare which has led to changes in vehicular circulation and modes of travel (increased micromobility and rideshare use). Its economic health has declined with changing commercial markets causing office and retail vacancies. Its character has deteriorated due to aging infrastructure, outdated design, deferred maintenance, lack of commercial interfaces with public space, and increased frequency of extreme weather events. A few of the challenging physical site conditions and impacts of existing conditions are noted below:

<u>Land Use and Civic Realm</u>

- Missing trees along the Avenue reduces the impact of framing the Capitol viewshed.
- Missing or broken pavers, bench slats, and other site elements create hazards and limit walkability.
- Tree roots in search of adequate soil volume displace pavers and curbs.
- Many vertical site elements exist within the Avenue corridor. The multiple types cause visual clutter, marring the beauty of the Avenue, and can be visually overwhelming to navigate.
- Multiple types of ad hoc perimeter security measures create visual clutter, detract from the cohesiveness of the Avenue, and do not adequately provide protection.
- During large events, attendees often climb onto temporary site security elements to get better views.

<u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u>

- Summer heat limits usage throughout the year.
- Dead, missing, and diseased trees in public space do not provide adequate shade.
- Flooding on the Avenue during major storm events limits usage throughout the year.
- Rubberized bike lane dividers, traffic signals, and other elements in the vehicular cartway that are part of the everyday infrastructure can create barriers to producing events, such as trip hazards and increased costs for temporary removal.
- Additional temporary infrastructure elements for events can feel haphazard and increase both event costs and set-up/breakdown times.











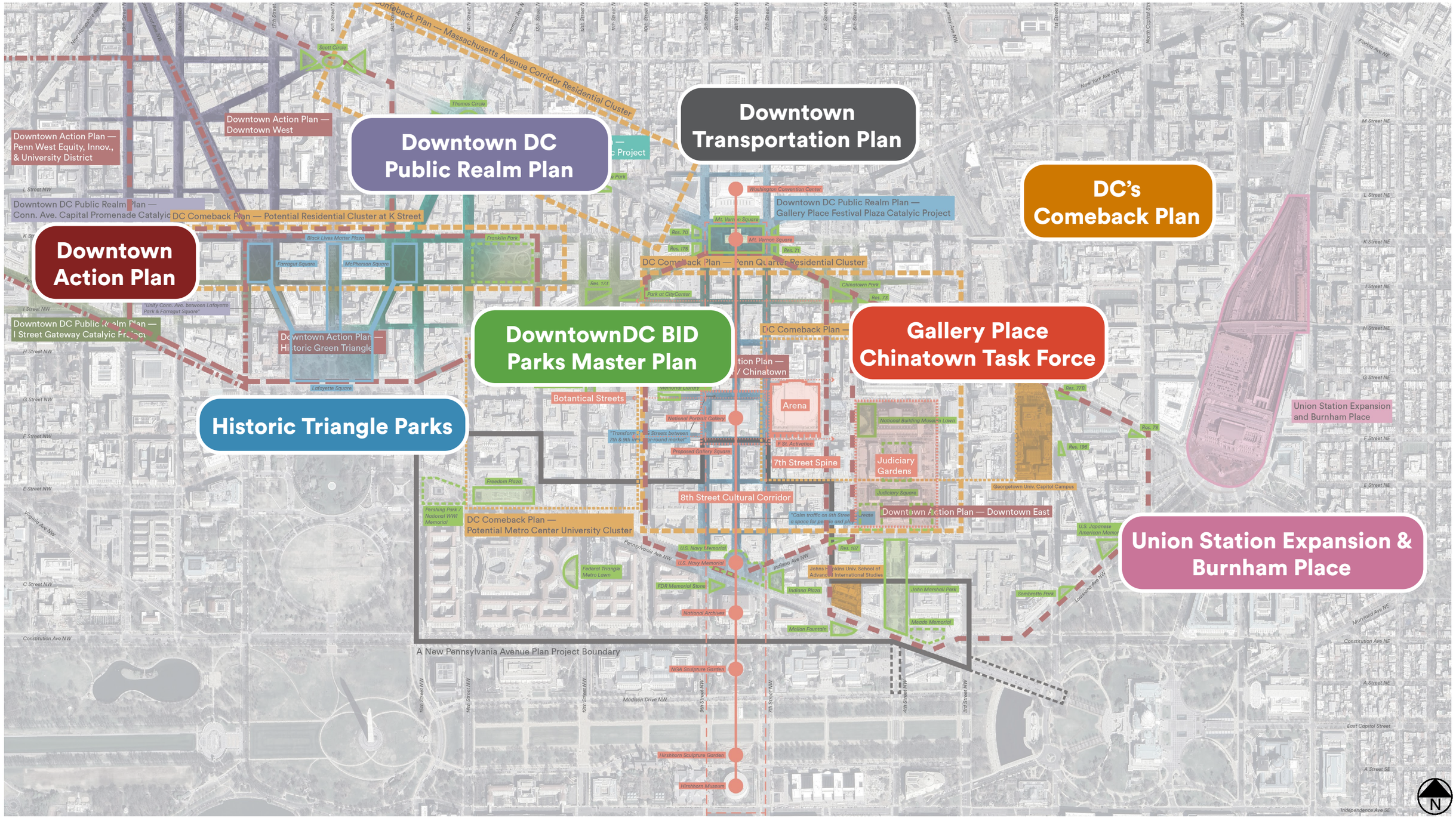






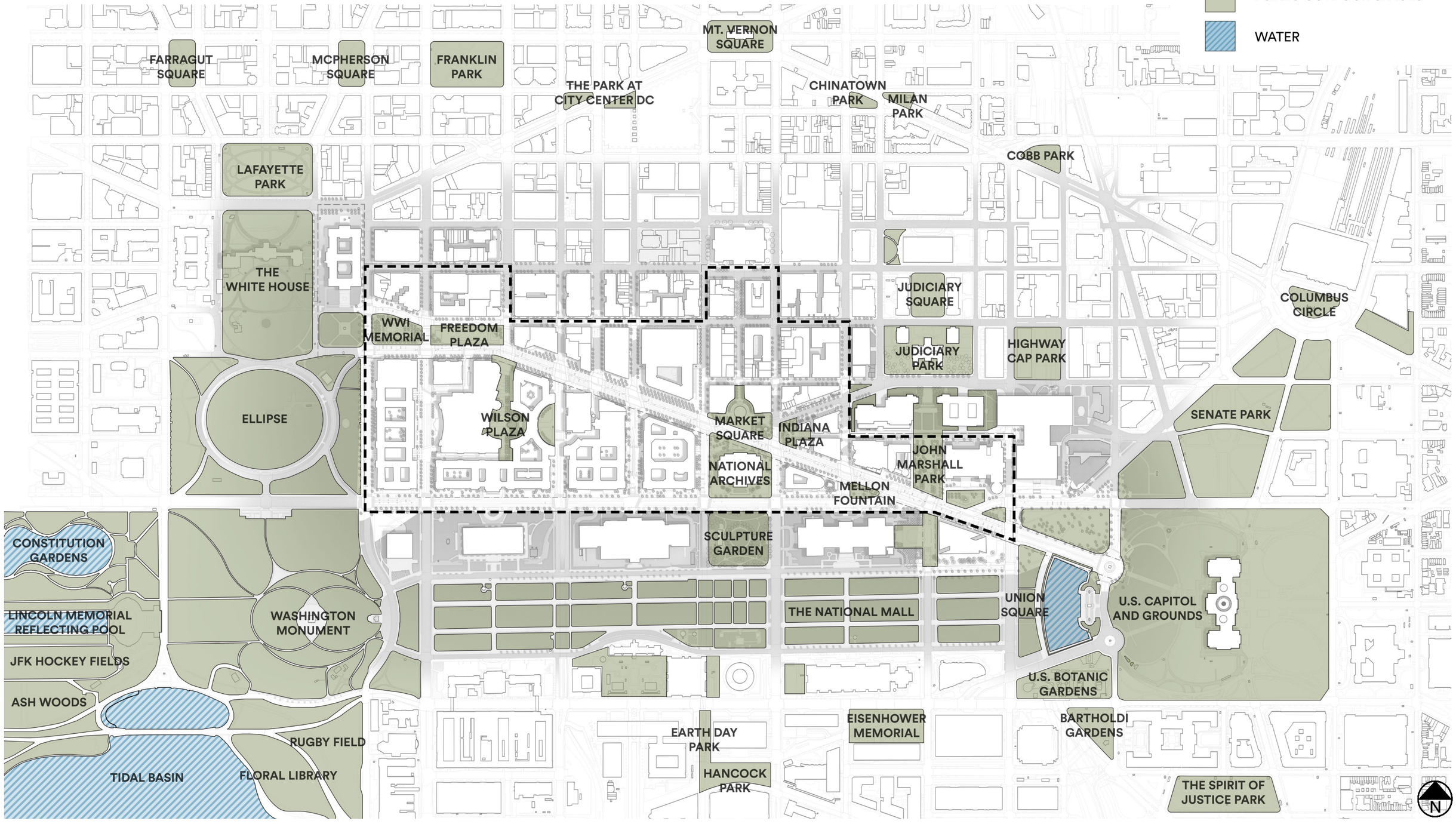
Other Planning Efforts

There are many recent or ongoing initiatives that are being implemented nearby the Plan Area. This plan is coordinating with those efforts where possible to facilitate a unified approach to downtown.



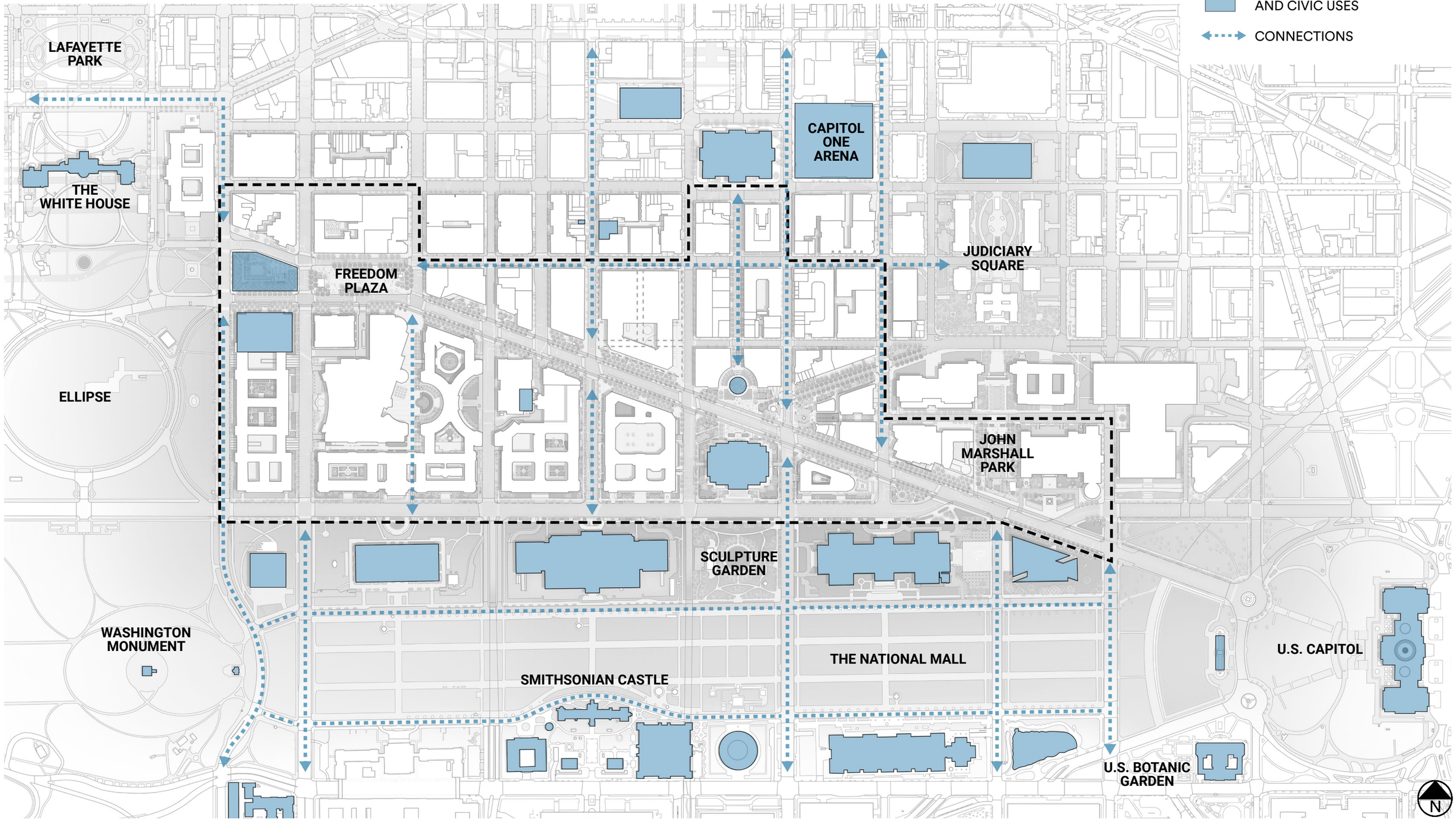
Nearby Parks and Public Spaces

A number of parks, green spaces, and public spaces sit just outside of the Plan Area, including the Sculpture Garden, the National Mall, President's Park, Farragut Square, McPherson Square, Franklin Park, Judiciary Square, the Senate Parks, and the US Capitol grounds.



Cultural Institutions & Civic Uses

The Plan Area bridges the Monumental Core and the urban fabric leading up to downtown DC. As such, there are a high number of landmarks of interest within and near the Study Area and key connections through the area.



Monuments, Memorials, Markers, Art

The Avenue includes an extensive number of statues, memorials, markers, and other pieces of art within the Plan Area. Three sites are identified as potential memorial candidate sites in the Memorials & Museums Master Plan. In addition to art within the exterior public space, many GSA buildings within the Federal Triangle also feature artwork inside their buildings.

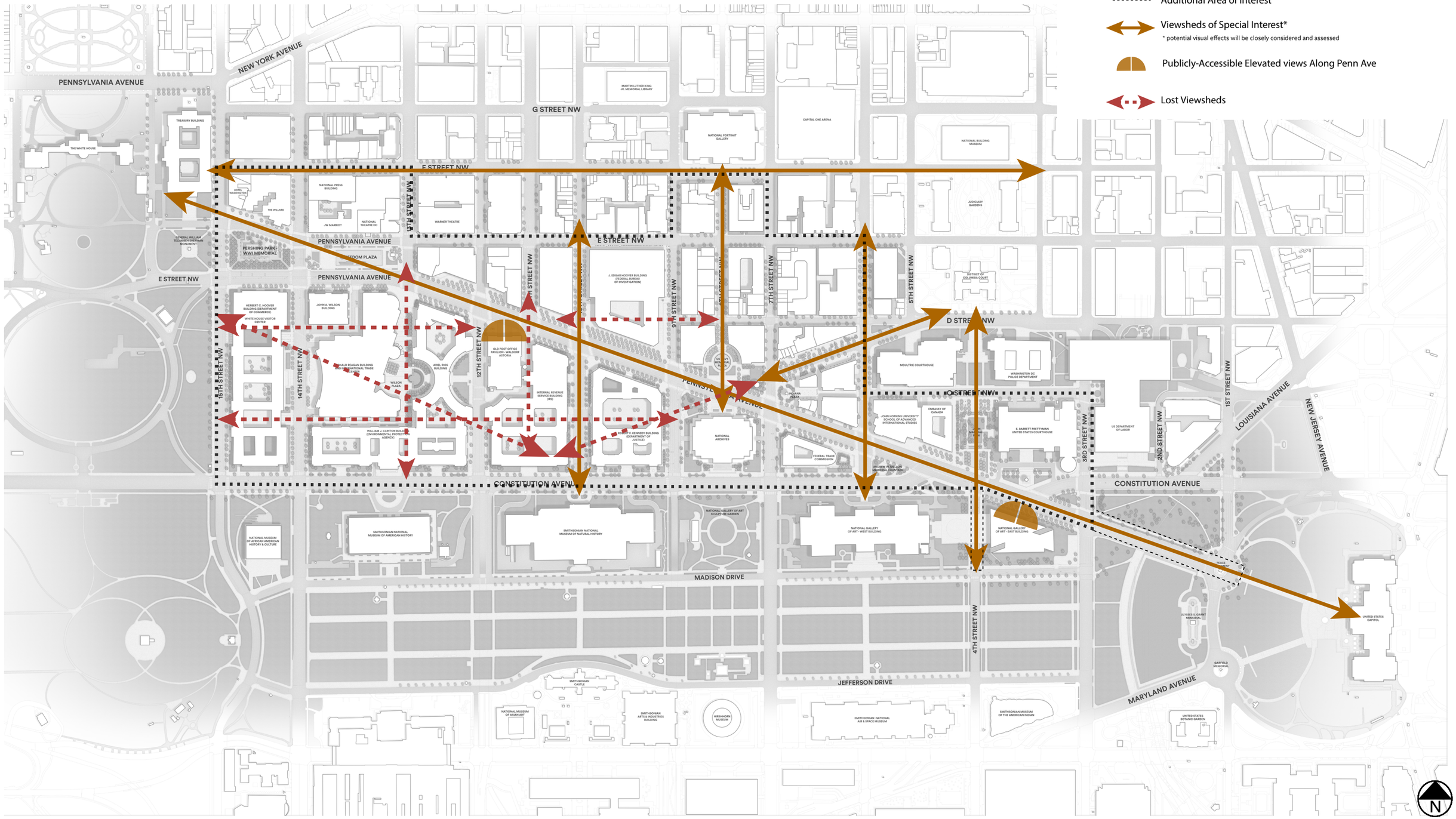
LEGEND

- EXISTING PUBLIC ART / MEMORIALS (EXTERIOR)
- EXISTING PUBLIC ART / MEMORIALS (INTERIOR)
- POTENTIAL MONUMENT OR MEMORIAL CANDIDATE SITES (WITHIN PROJECT AREA)



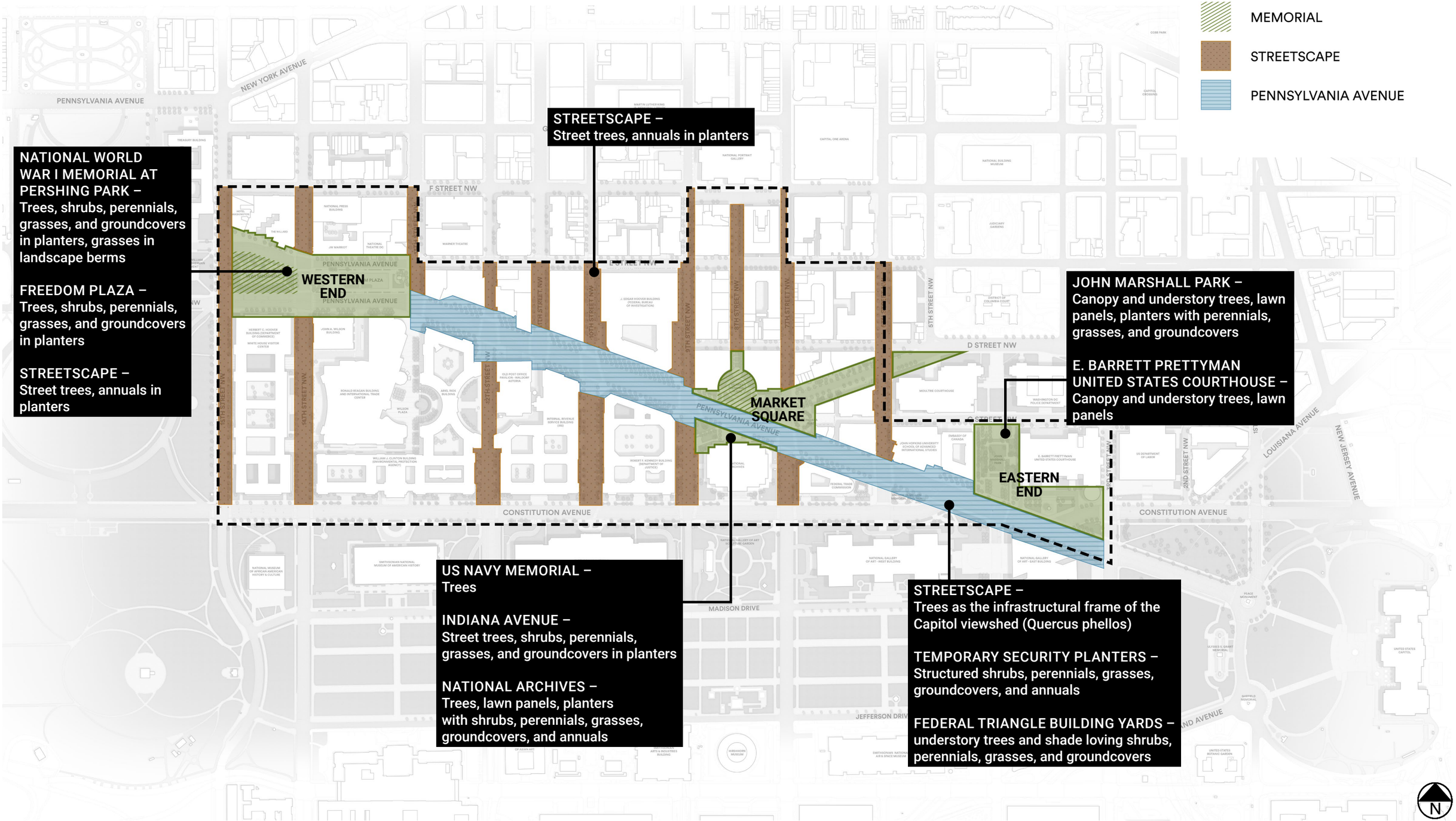
Views And Viewsheds

In addition to the Capitol Viewshed, a number of viewsheds and vistas are of interest within the Plan Area. Additionally, many viewsheds have been lost or interrupted over time due to development.



Landscape Types

The differing landscape types within the Plan Area create distinct experiences and promote framing of views, pause and respite, and movement through a vibrant city.



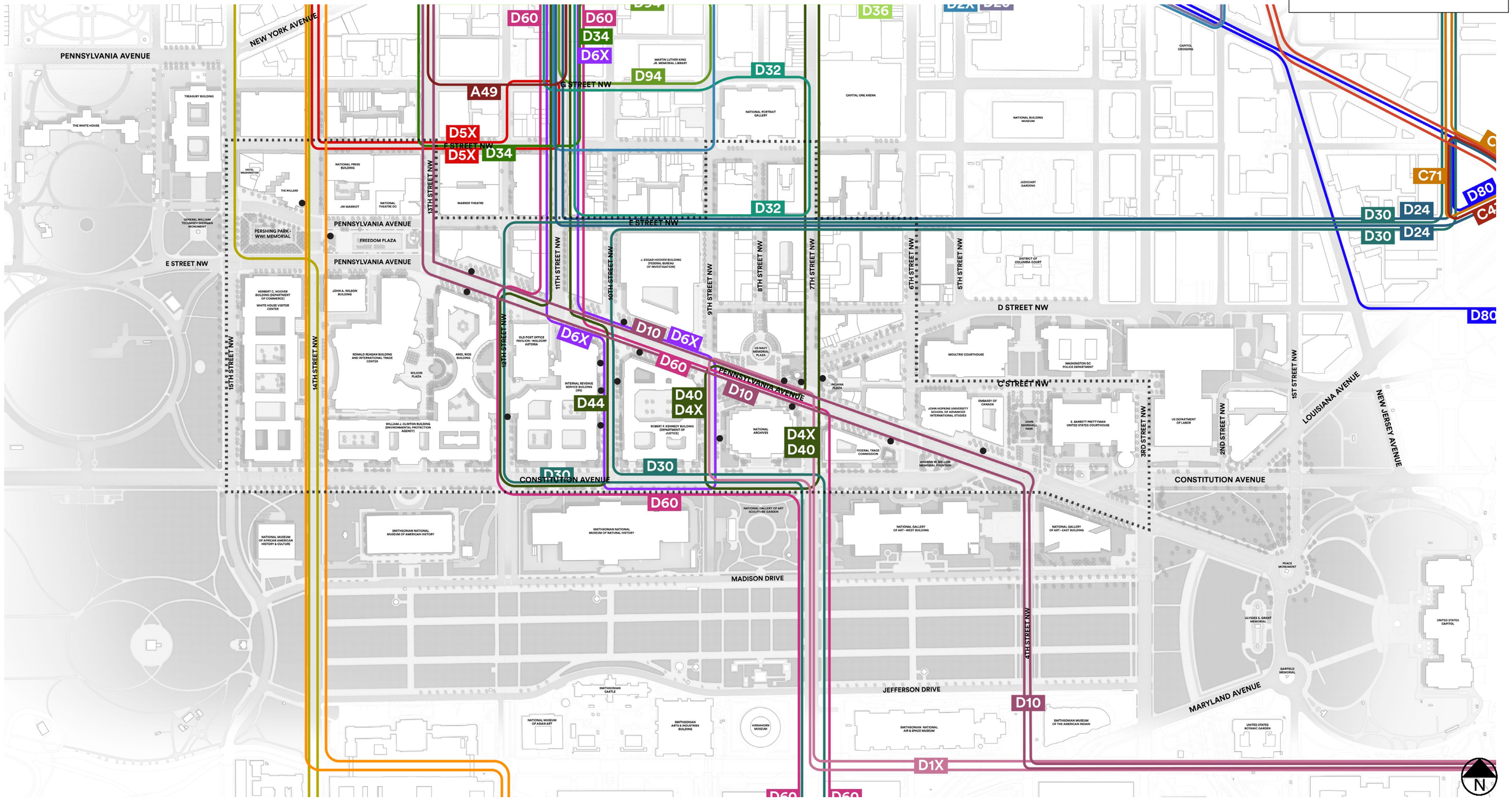
Major Infrastructure Crossings

Pennsylvania Avenue is traversed by the I-395 tunnel and two WMATA tunnels. The Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Metro station has a platform directly beneath the roadway. The second Metro crossing is along 12th Street NW.



Existing Bus Network

Pennsylvania Avenue is a transit-rich corridor, with Metrorail, local bus, and commuter bus service providing local and regional connectivity. Five Metrobus routes serve nine stops on the corridor—five in the eastbound direction, four westbound. Another four Metrobus routes cross the corridor but do not travel along it. All of the Metrobus routes that serve the corridor are part of WMATA's High Frequency Network and provide frequent service to a diverse range of neighborhoods including Capitol Hill, Far Southeast, Brookland, Petworth, and Silver Spring, among others.



Existing Bike Network

DDOT has built out a comprehensive network of dedicated bicycle facilities along many downtown streets, providing local access to the many office, commercial, and residential uses located in the area. The Pennsylvania Avenue existing center-running cycle track has become a critical facility in the larger bicycle network established in the downtown area of the District of Columbia. The District Department of Transportation installed the Pennsylvania Avenue center-running cycle track in 2010 to expand its network of safe and accessible bicycle facilities as part of an initiative to expand the bike network on major roadway corridors, including 15th Street, 9th Street, and 4th Street.

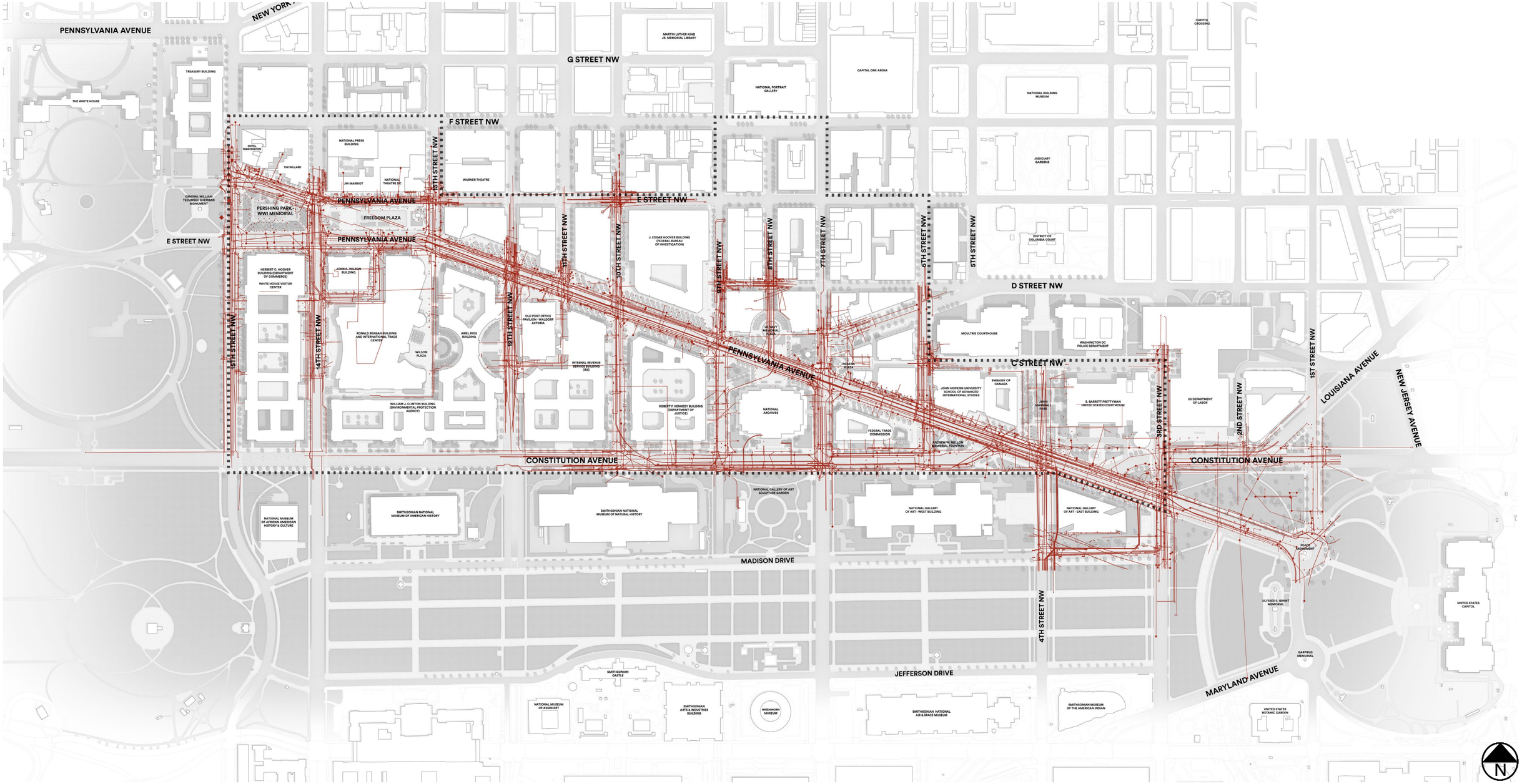


Existing Utilities

Pennsylvania Avenue's subsurface contains a complex and extensive network of utilities and infrastructure that are crucial to its daily function and future development. These utilities provide both the necessary services and connections for adjacent buildings along the corridor, as well as main trunks and transmission level utilities conveying larger loads. Many of the utilities within the corridor have exceeded their design life and if disturbed will require extensive deferred maintenance or replacement.

LEGEND

- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- UTILITY LINE



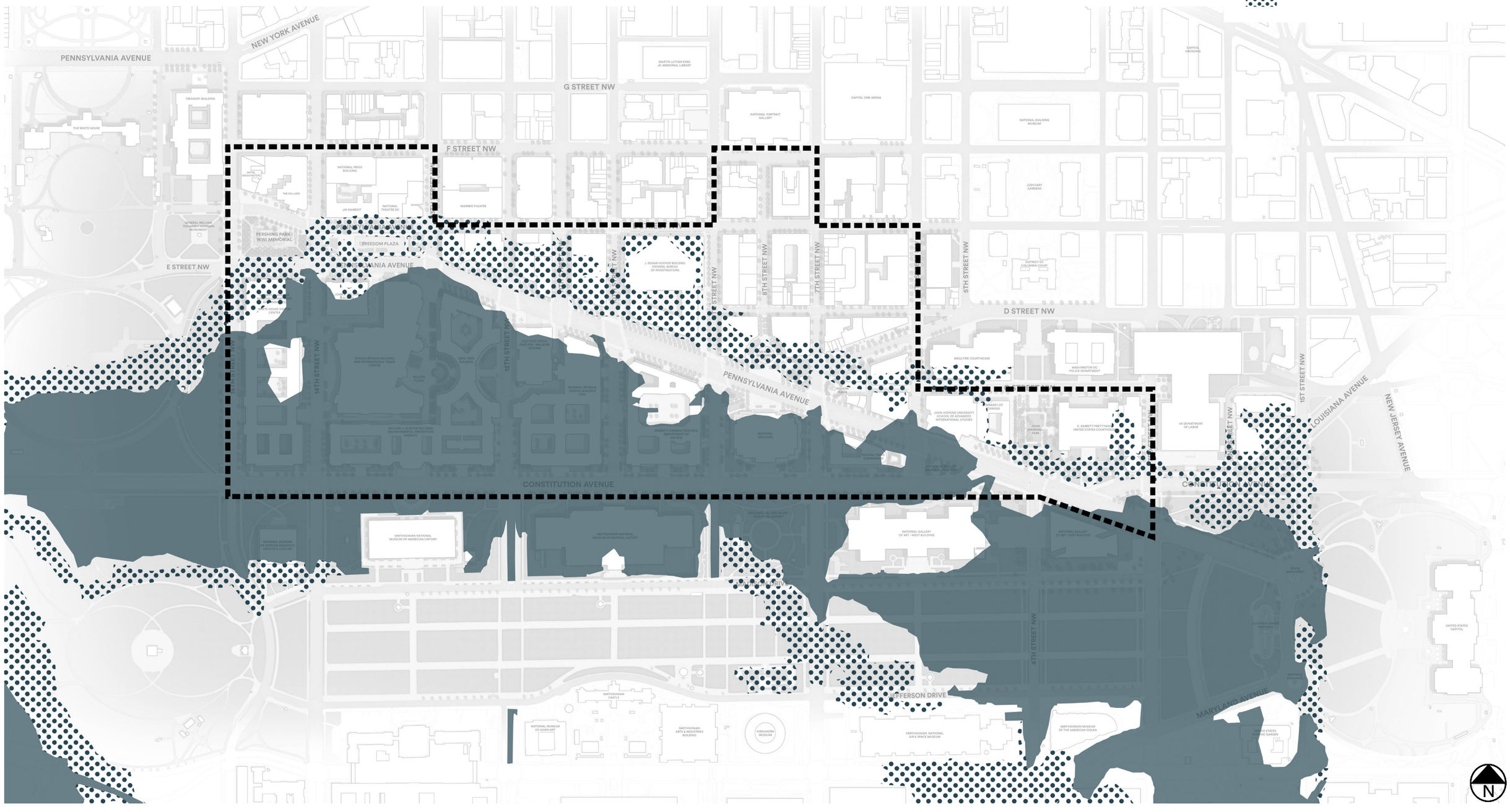
Stormwater

Major flooding events have highlighted challenges due to intense storms and outdated infrastructure along Pennsylvania Avenue. Extensive collaboration among federal, regional, and local agencies has led to studies, workshops, and assessments focused on understanding and addressing flood risks. Approximately half of the Plan Area sits within the 100 year flood plain. Although this project will not solve the larger Monumental Core stormwater challenges, stormwater infrastructure will be considered within the Public Space Master Plan and further design.

LEGEND

100 YEAR FLOOD EVENT

500 YEAR FLOOD EVENT



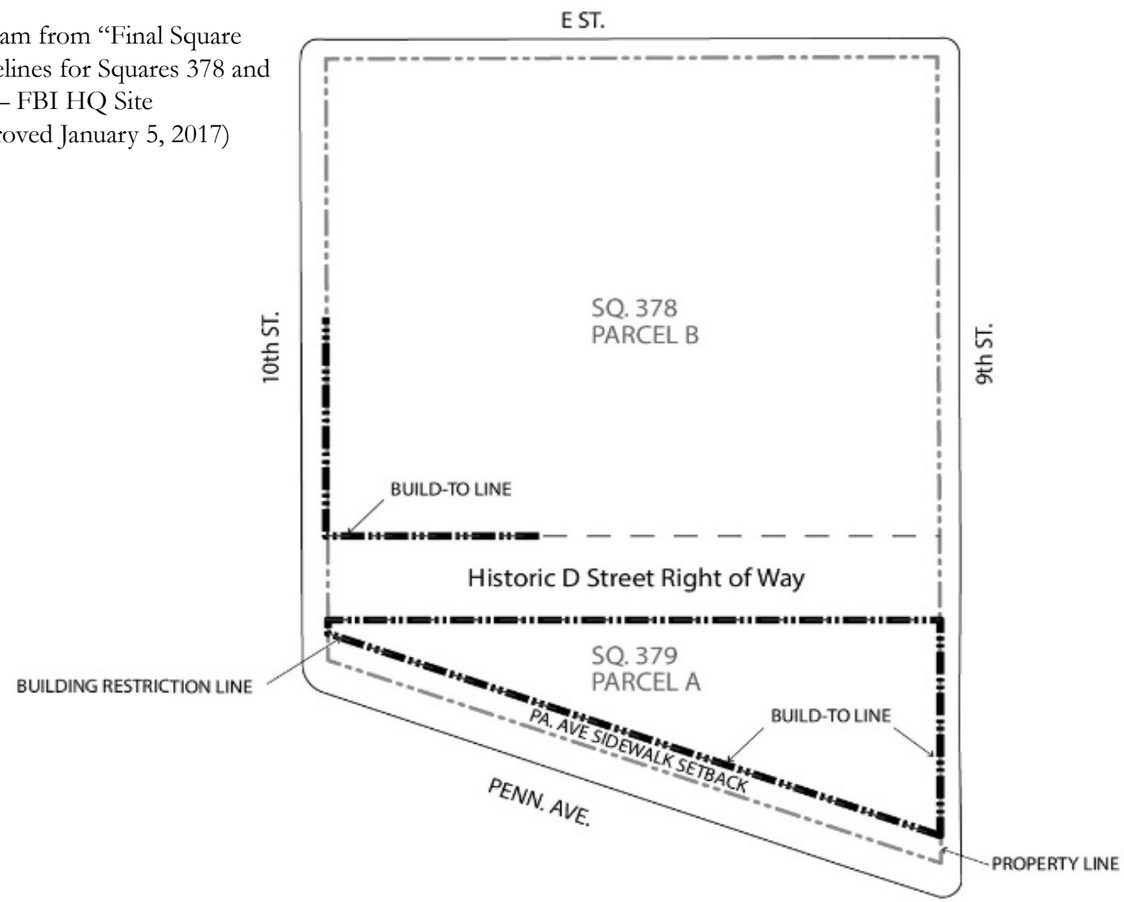
Potential Redevelopment Sites — J. Edgar Hoover Building & Frances Perkins Building

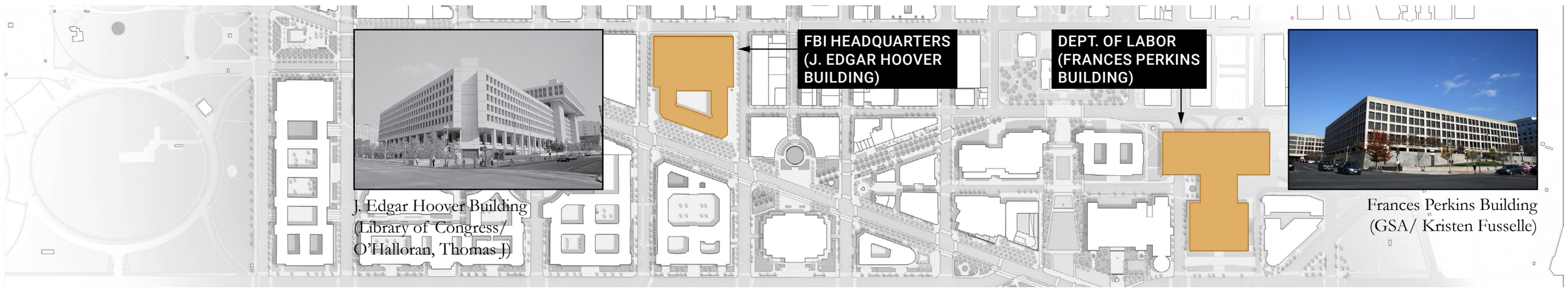
Federal agencies have been considering disposal of the J. Edgar Hoover Building and the Frances Perkins Building for redevelopment. Both multi-block buildings interrupt the historic L'Enfant Plan street grid. Should these properties be demolished and redeveloped, it is important to restore these L'Enfant streets, re-introducing a finer-grained street network and increase building daylight and permeability, as well as connectivity and opportunities for a richer public realm.

The J. Edgar Hoover Building (FBI Headquarters site) fronts Pennsylvania Avenue between 9th Street NW and 10th Street NW; it is the north side's longest uninterrupted façade at the Avenue's midpoint. In its current state, it is a dead zone sitting across the street from one of the south side's longest uninterrupted facades. Redevelopment of this site will create an active, comfortable urban street. The 2016 Square Guidelines for this site highlights the importance of reconnecting D Street NW, activating the ground floors and providing public space that accommodates at least two rows of trees, pedestrian walkways, and an activity zone along its frontage. Redevelopment of this site should respect the vista to the U.S. Capitol Building and be consistent with Pennsylvania Avenue's planned unified streetscape.

The Frances Perkins Building sits just east of the plan area. The existing site is complex; its building masses block historic L'Enfant vistas and through-streets and includes highway on- and off-ramps and a large ventilation stack for the underground portion of Interstate 395. Future redevelopment can reconnect the street grid, open up blocked vistas, and retain access to I-395. Proposed buildings should draw their forms and scale to be harmonious with the context and provide a variety of residential and commercial, to civic and hotel uses; some buildings may be required to accommodate the vent shafts. Redevelopment would create a finer grained, walkable block structure and a new use mix would bring more people to the area and help to activate John Marshall Park and the Eastern End public space overall.

Diagram from "Final Square Guidelines for Squares 378 and 379" – FBI HQ Site (Approved January 5, 2017)





J. Edgar Hoover Building (Library of Congress/ O'Halloran, Thomas J)

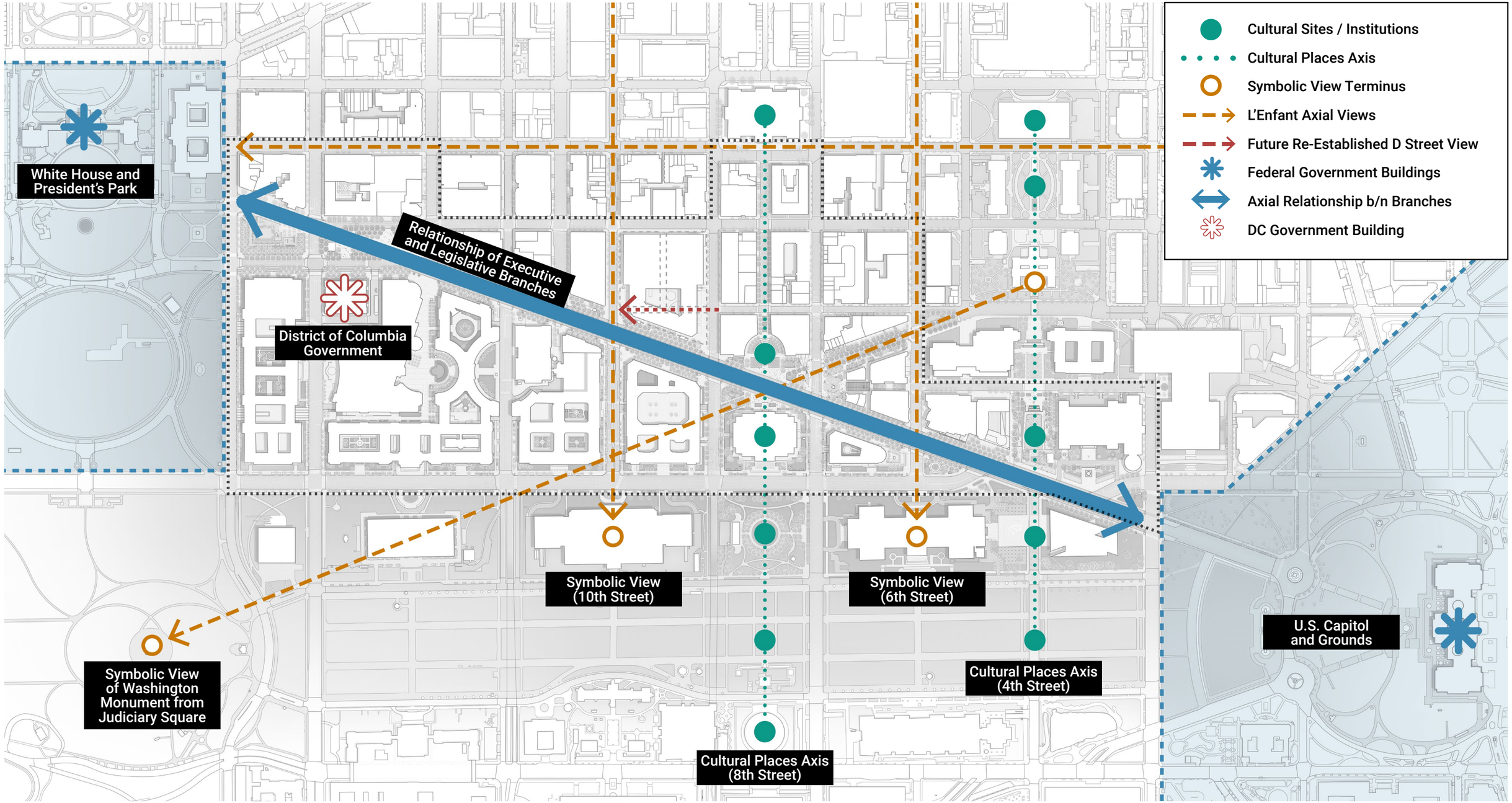
Frances Perkins Building (GSA/ Kristen Fusselle)

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

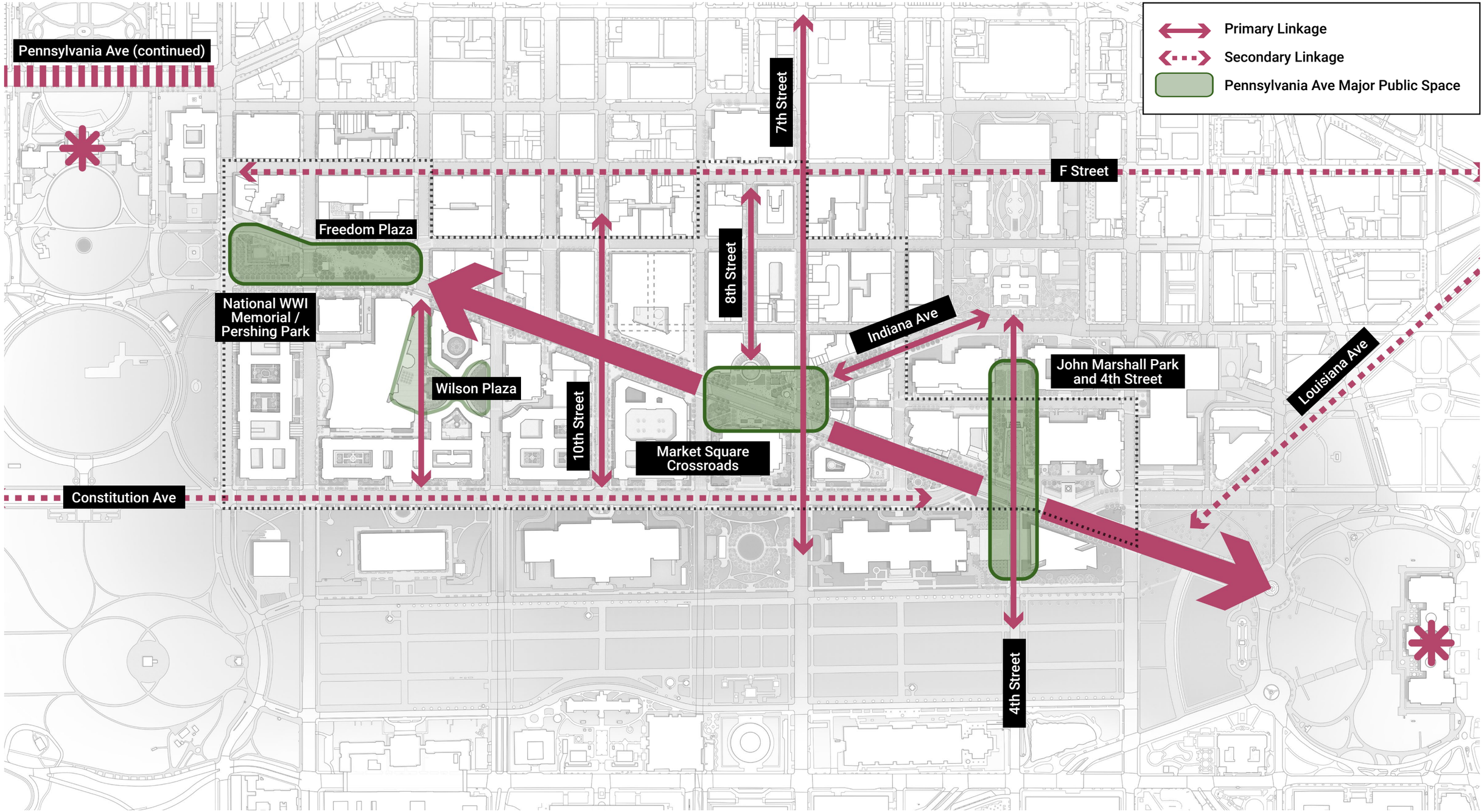
Bolster the Symbolic Relationships of the L'Enfant Plan

The L'Enfant Plan manifests in urban organization the symbolic relationships between the branches of government. Additionally, major public spaces, cultural institutions, and monumental axes are embedded in DC's plan.



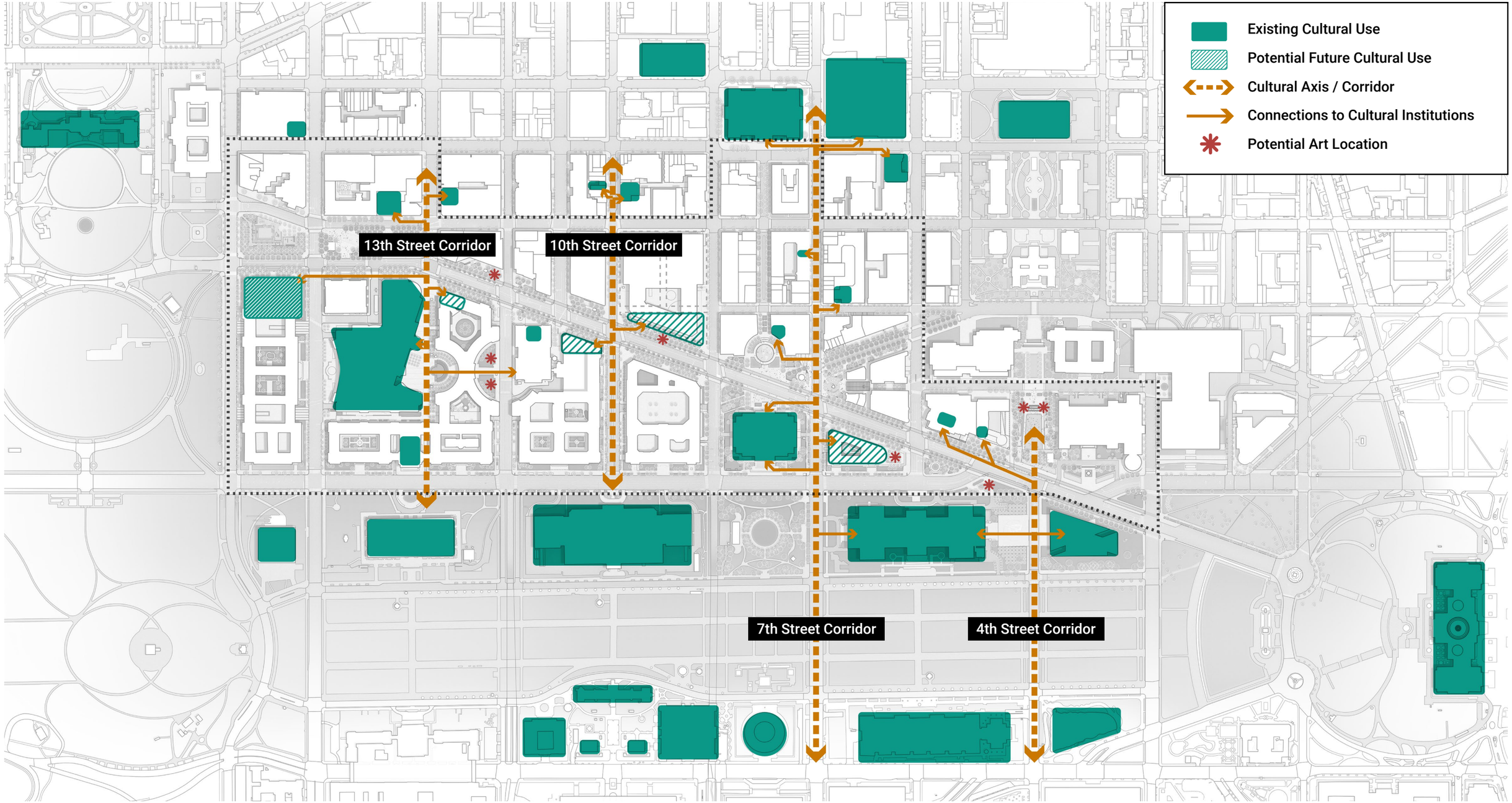
Civic Linkages

Pennsylvania Avenue is centered around several prominent civic linkages as part of the Monumental Core and Downtown. Primary linkages include Indiana Avenue, 4th, 7th, 8th, 10th, and 13th Streets which connect the city and cultural institutions to the major public spaces. Additionally F Street, Louisiana Avenue, and Constitution Avenue are monumental streets that frame the study area and link to broader civic landmarks in the city.



Cultural Uses and Opportunities

Leverage existing cultural institutions to create "cultural corridors" on 7th Street, 10th Street, and 13th Street (in conjunction with Wilson Plaza). Potential future cultural institutions could be established at the FBI Redevelopment Site, and within Federal Triangle should future uses transform along the Avenue.



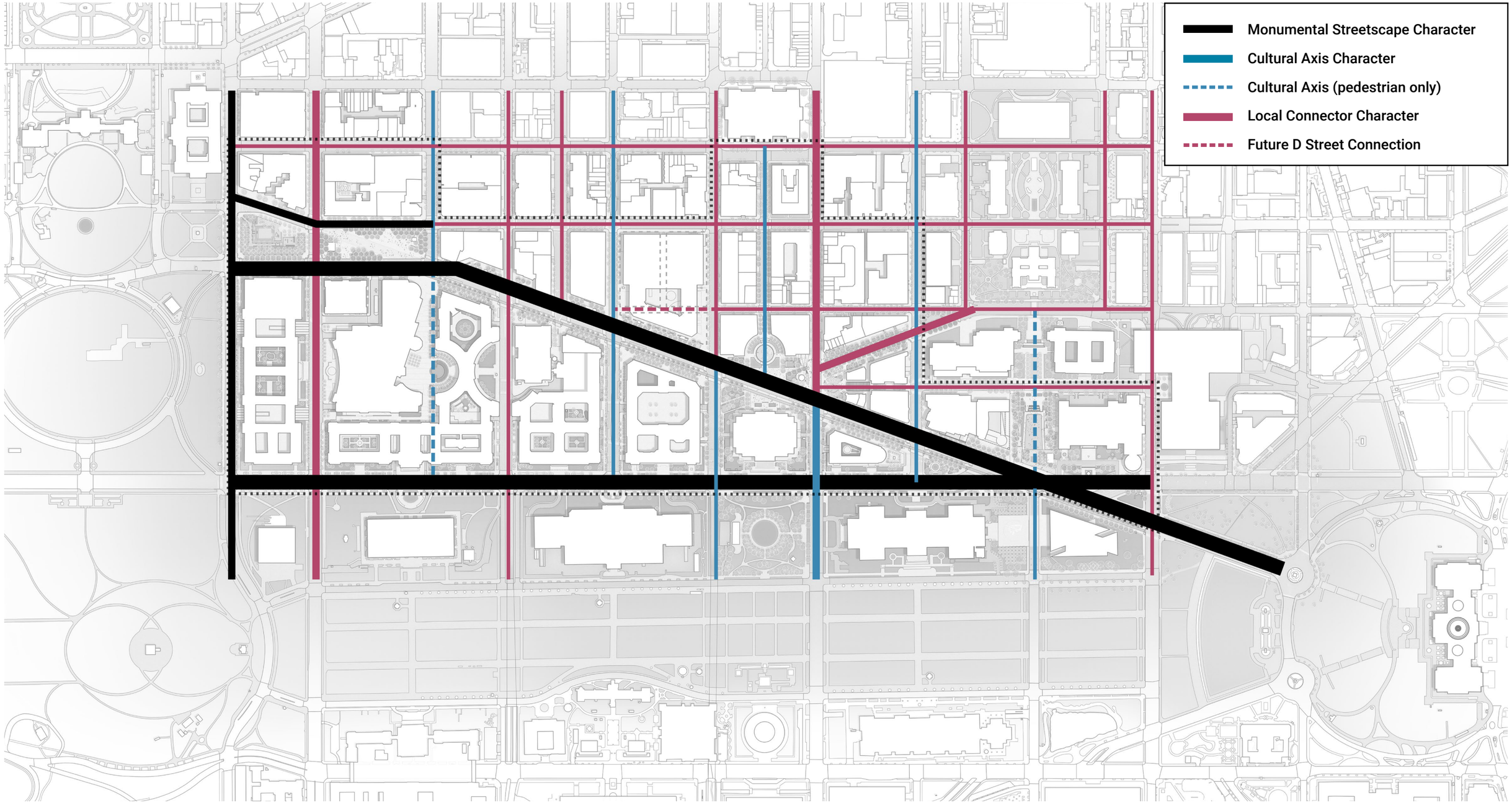
Active Building Uses and Educational / Cultural Frontages

Facilitate retail and commerce nodes where existing buildings are already primed for ground floor uses. Prioritize commerce nodes that focus on food and experiential retail on Pennsylvania Avenue near 7th – 9th Streets, Indiana Avenue, and 10th – 13th Streets. Bolster commerce potential on E Street and F Street. Additionally, several cultural and educational institutions provide active frontages along the Avenue, prioritizing public facing programming, such as dining, auditorium spaces, galleries, and exhibition spaces.



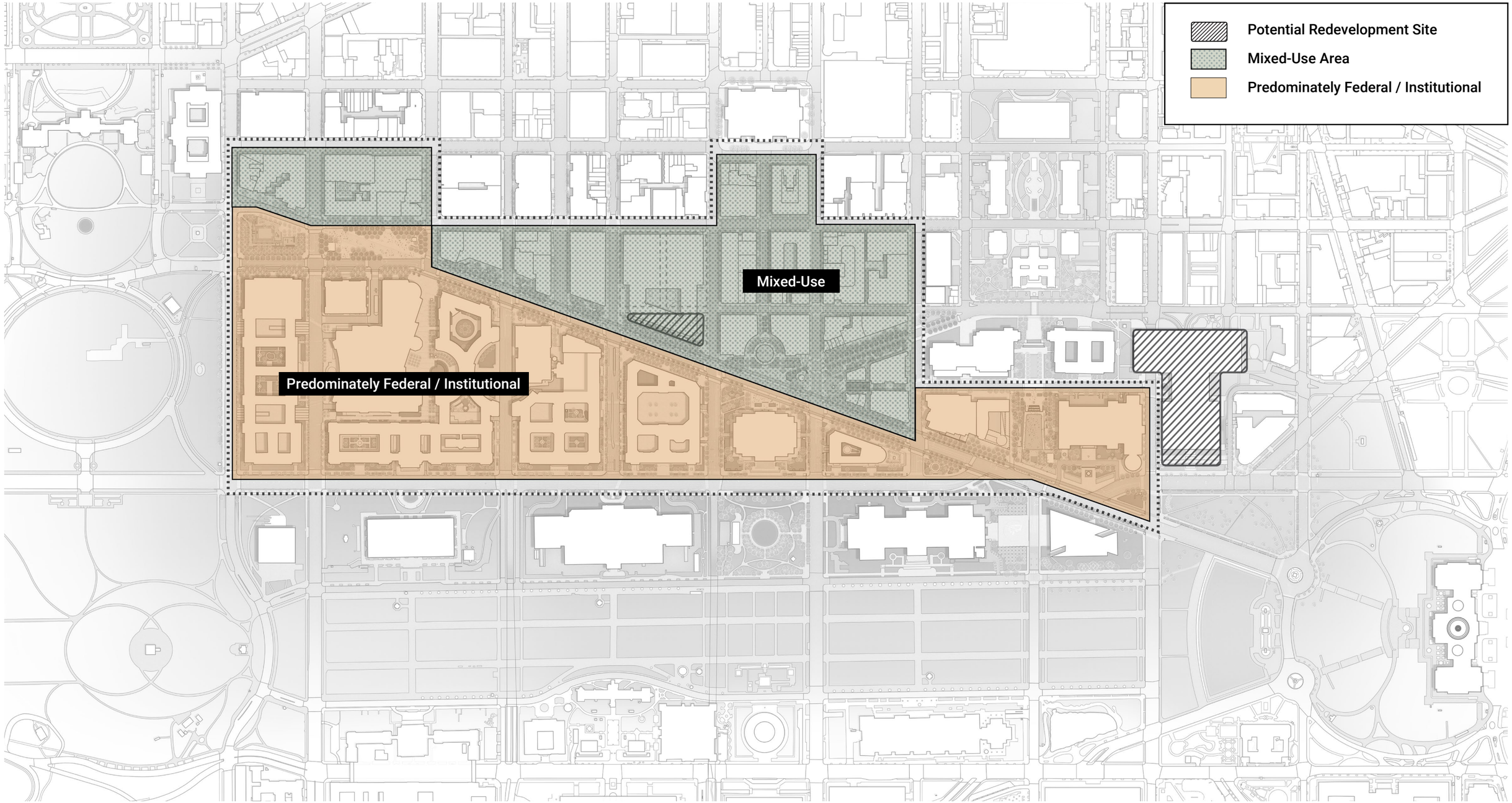
Street Character

In addition to the new proposal for Pennsylvania Avenue itself, the study area includes other streets that should have distinct character. Constitution Avenue and 15th Street are monumental streets that are making symbolic connection deeper into the Monumental Core of the city. Several cultural axes connect primary institutional buildings, often bounded by primary views toward these architectural landmarks, such as the National Museum of Natural History, the National Gallery of Art, the National Archives, the National Portrait Gallery, and the Historic DC Courthouse (and Judiciary Square). Other local connector streets should be characterized by active frontages, great street trees, and convenient access to multi-modal options.



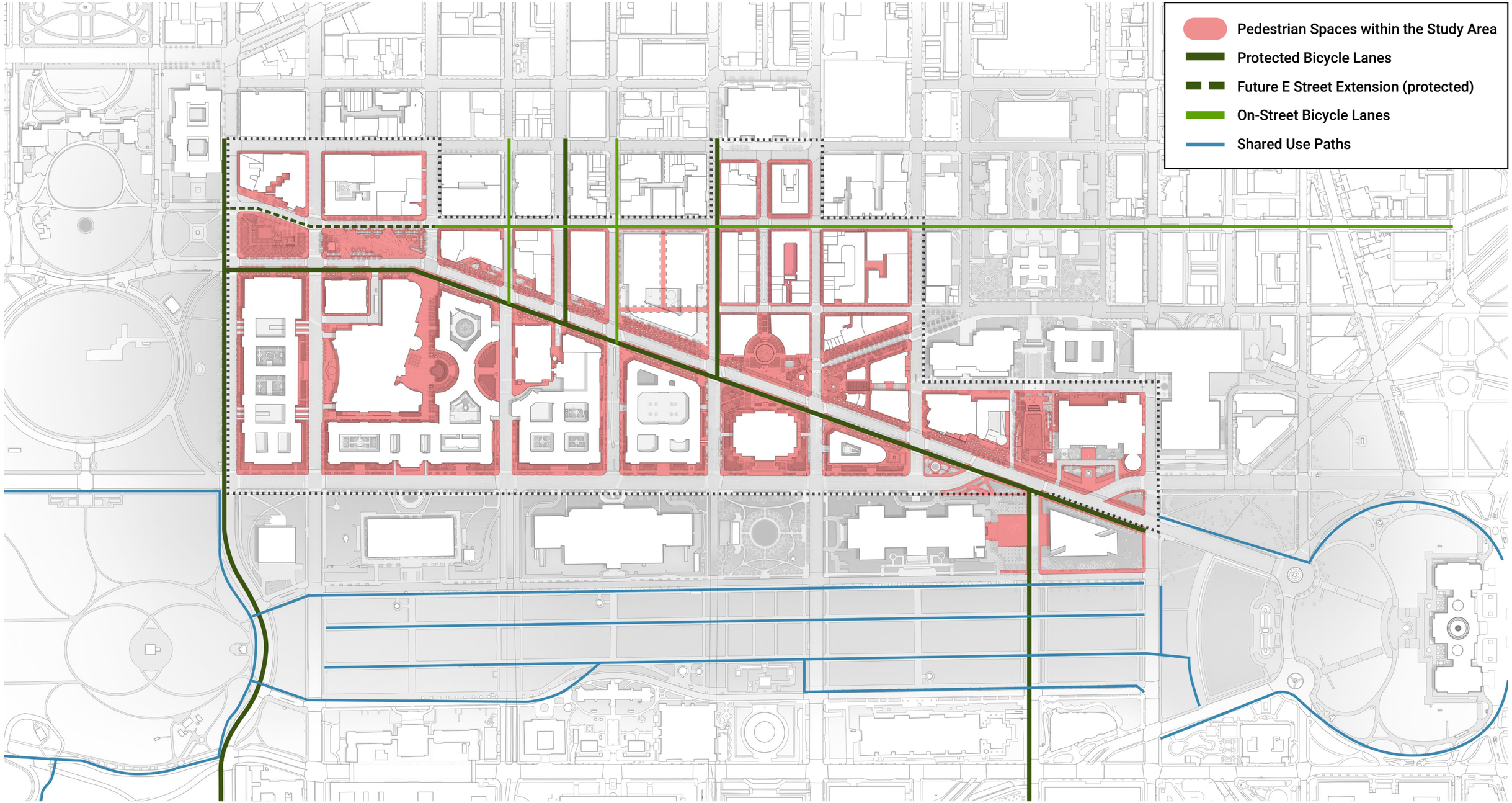
Land Use Opportunities

Land uses along Pennsylvania Avenue should reinforce its dual role as a nationally significant civic and ceremonial corridor and a vibrant part of downtown Washington. A diverse and flexible mix of residential, office, hotel, cultural, entertainment, civic, institutional, retail, and service uses should attract residents, workers, and visitors; support activity throughout the day, evening, and weekend; and strengthen connections between downtown and the monumental core.



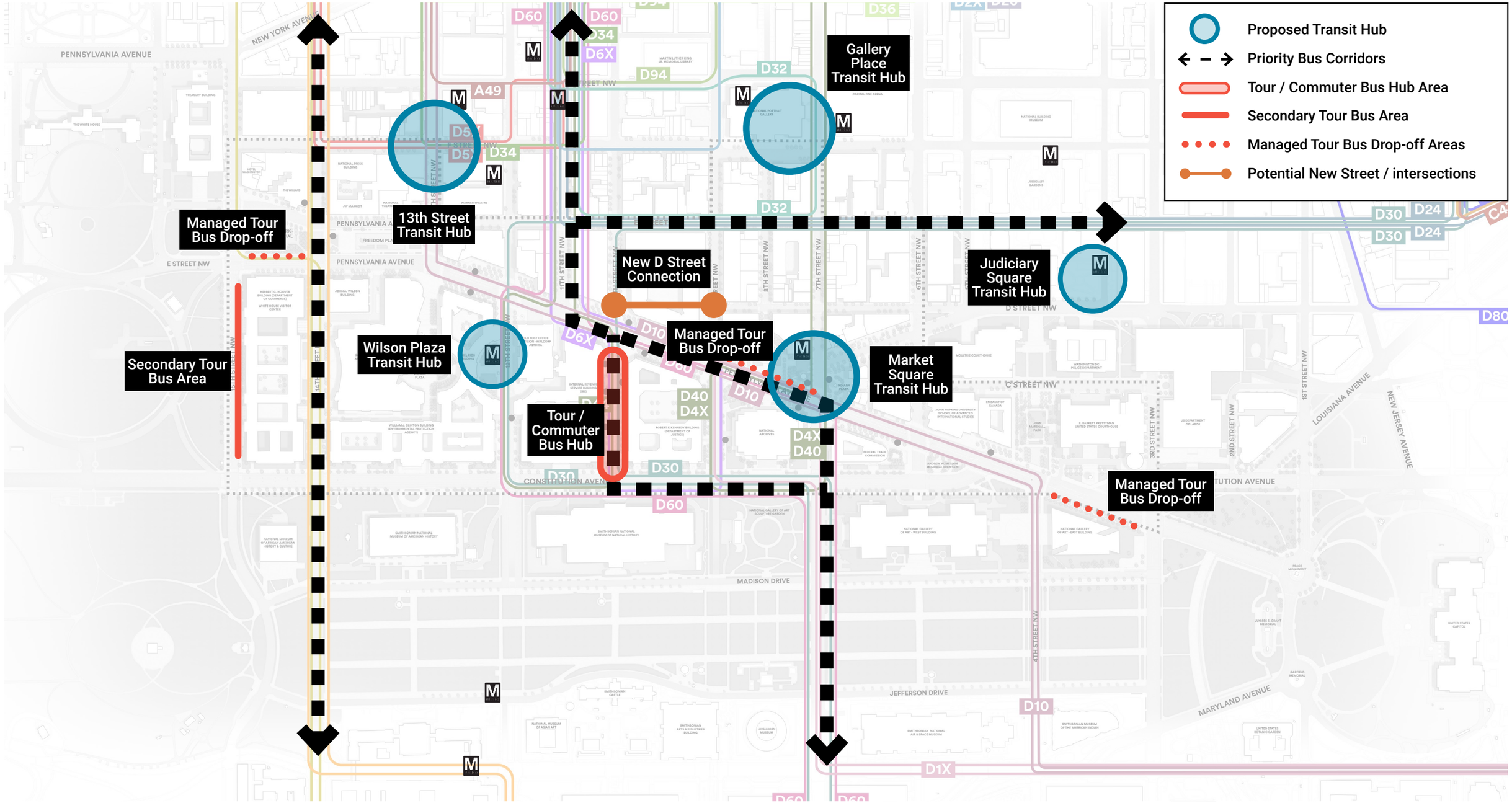
Pedestrian and Cycling Network

The pedestrian and cycling network is already extensive within the study area; however, there are a few key connections missing. First, DDOT already has plans for connecting E Street bicycle lanes between 13th and 15th Streets. The plan includes protected bicycle lanes for these blocks completing a critical connection in the city. Additionally a new shaded and protected cycletrack is proposed on Pennsylvania Avenue, and new pedestrian connection may become available should the FBI Headquarters site redevelop on this large block between 9th and 10th Streets.



Transit Access and Hubs

Pennsylvania Avenue is a transit-rich corridor, with Metrorail, local bus, and commuter bus service providing local and regional connectivity. Additionally commuter and tour buses are common within the study area. New priority bus areas are identified on 15th Street and 10th Street as well as temporary bus pick-up areas on Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets, between 7th and 9th Streets, and between 3rd and 4th Streets. These are not intended to be bus standing or parking areas and will require active management to allow for continual rotation and access for these users.



Events Opportunities and Infrastructure

New event infrastructure is critical to the long-term success of the Avenue, moving away from temporary elements where possible. Locations are being identified for several new infrastructural connection points near primary event locations throughout the study area. These can serve for metered power to avoid unnecessary generators as well as other support components.





CORRIDOR

(3RD STREET TO 13TH STREET)

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street)

The overarching goal of the streetscape is to rightsize the vehicular cartway to prioritize the pedestrian, multi-modal access, and daily urban vibrancy, while still supporting current events—and future events yet imagined—the most significant being the presidential inauguration every four years.

A minimum of two rows of trees on each side of the Avenue is used to frame the Capitol. The planting character will be continuous along the Avenue with breaks to the rhythm occurring only at L'Enfant Plan cross-streets and larger public spaces. A two-way cycle track is proposed south of the Avenue outside of the vehicular cartway. With the right-sizing of the Avenue, the north side of the Avenue is prioritized for an expanded sidewalk that can support additional activation and programming. Since the south side of the Avenue is lined with government offices, major pedestrian activity will naturally occur on the north side, which will be lined with shops and restaurants that attract large volumes of tourists, residents, and workers. Making the north side a magnet for pedestrians will also help to draw people into the main downtown shopping core, especially tourists, who rarely venture away from the National Mall and museums to the south. For this reason, a wider, more inviting pedestrian area would be provided on the north side.

A limited number of focused interventions are recommended along the southern sidewalks along the Avenue due to the larger security demands for government buildings at Federal Triangle.

GOALS FOR THE CORRIDOR INCLUDE:

- Frame and preserve the historic Capitol viewshed for all users through the use of trees
- Rightsize the vehicular cartway to support all users on the Avenue, including vehicle, cyclist, and pedestrian circulation
- Activate and program the Avenue appropriately to support daily urban life and tourists alike
- Modernize outdated and failing utilities below-grade
- Mitigate effects from extreme climate and storm events including flooding and urban heat island effects
- Support events currently active on the Avenue, and improve current infrastructure for future events

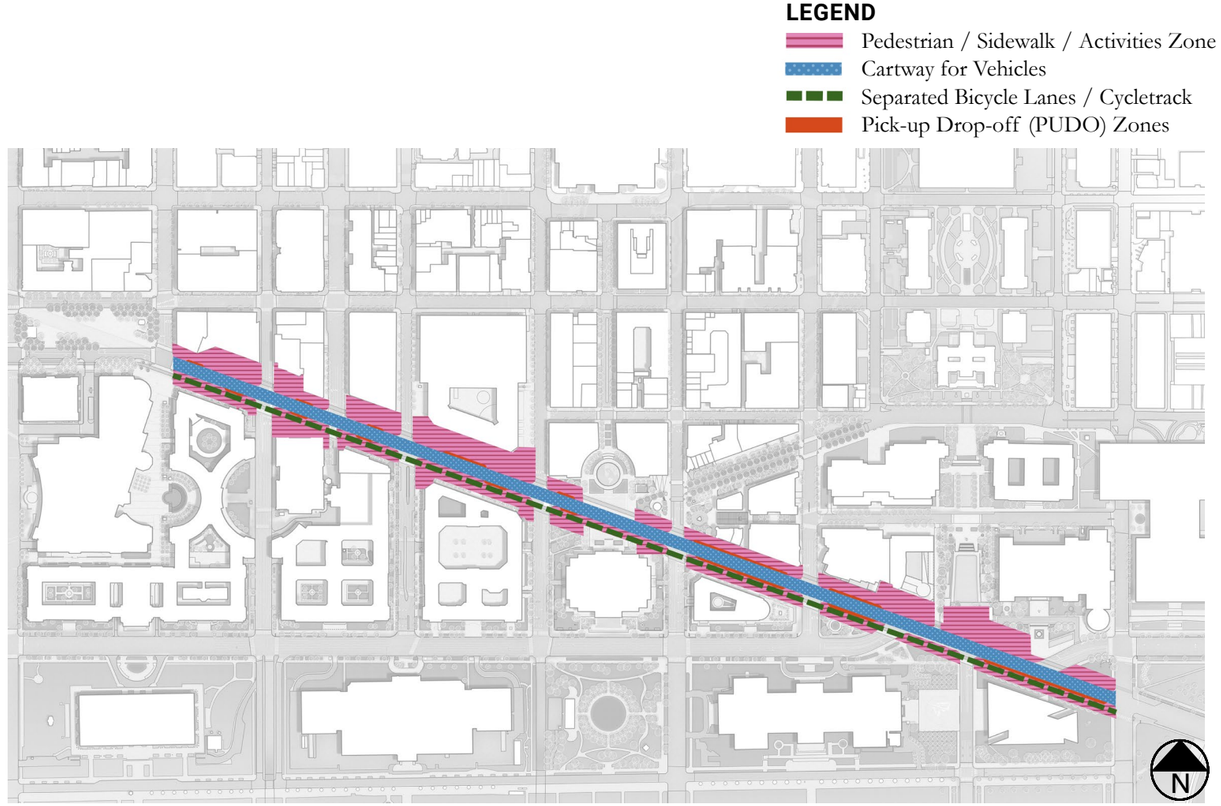
WHAT WE HEARD FROM NCPC / CFA COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

- Symbolic framing is important
- Shade is necessary for DC summers, more canopy trees are better
- Pennsylvania Avenue requires a unique frame differentiated from other D.C. avenues
- The street section should be aligned with the L'Enfant centerline
- Bicycle safety is paramount and valuable to both cyclists and pedestrians
- General support for reduction of car lanes

Note: The project partners envision that elements from the corridor layout described within this section could also apply to Pennsylvania Avenue between Third Street NW and First Street NW. This section of the Avenue is under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), and the extension of the Plan in this area would be coordinated with the AOC and only implemented with their oversight and approval.

DESIGN UPDATES SINCE CONCEPT REVIEW (APRIL 2026):

- Selected hybrid tree planting strategy with a signature tree along each side of the cartway and a second row of trees (or more depending on right-of-way width) to frame the Capitol view
- Confirmed right-sized traffic lanes and volume through updated traffic studies, pick-up/drop-off areas, dedicated cycling spaces, and bus stops and access.
- Centered cartway on historic L'Enfant axis centerline
- Confirmed event compatibility and flexibility
- Explored expanded sidewalk programming
- Continued utilities analysis and planning for below-grade infrastructure upgrades
- Removed the multi-functional pole alternative from consideration due to challenges with visual impact and long-term maintenance



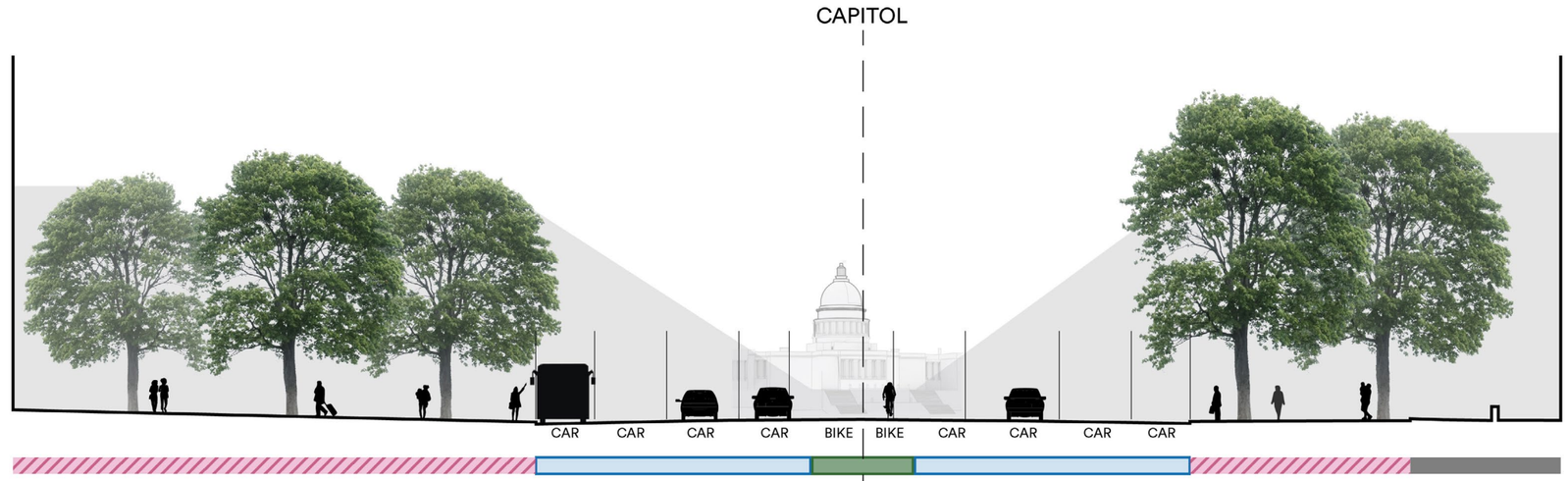
Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Existing Conditions

EXISTING CONDITIONS

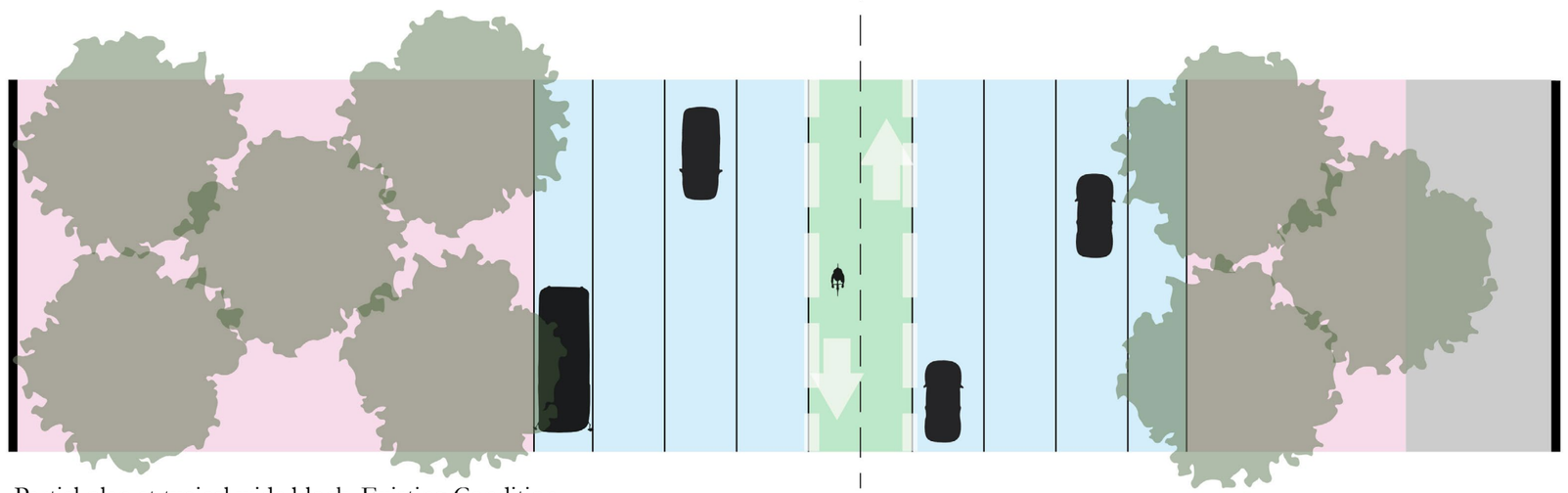
Designed 50 years ago when this street served as a major vehicular artery before E Street was closed in front of the White House, the Avenue is currently configured with four lanes of traffic traveling in each direction, oversized for current traffic demands.

The street also has a two-way cycle track positioned within the cartway at the center of the Avenue. Sidewalk widths vary from block to block and vary within blocks, ranging from 27 to 80 feet depending on building setbacks. The widths and relationship to the cartway provides a special civic space and accommodates streetscape amenities unique to the Avenue, including allées of trees, specially designed benches, infrastructure, and various types of light fixtures. In narrow blocks, only one row of trees is currently accommodated in the limited sidewalk areas.

There are many vertical site elements that make up the streetscape experience of the Avenue. While some of these are infrastructural elements that support the necessary functions of the Avenue, others include site furnishing that provides moments to rest along the journey. Due to the large variety of vertical site elements, a cohesive strategy or family of elements is recommended.



Section at typical wide block, Existing Condition



Partial plan at typical wide block, Existing Condition



Existing Conditions: View of Avenue facing east between 9th and 10th Streets

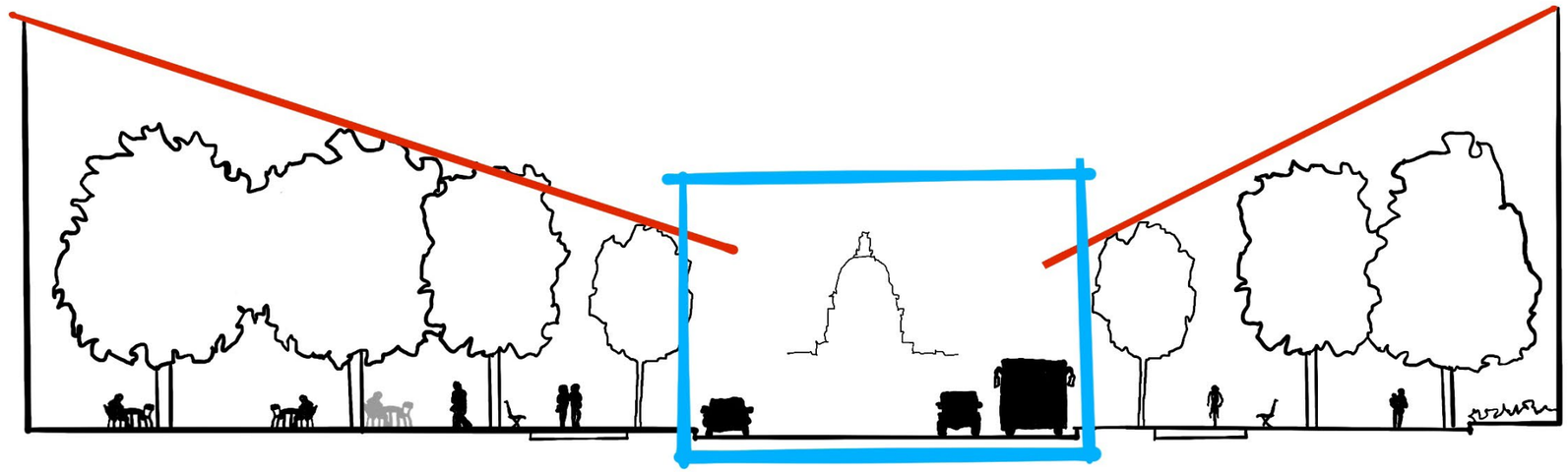
LEGEND

- Pedestrian / Sidewalk / Activities Zone
- Cartway for Vehicles
- Separated Bicycle Lanes / Cycletrack
- Building Yard for Federal Triangle

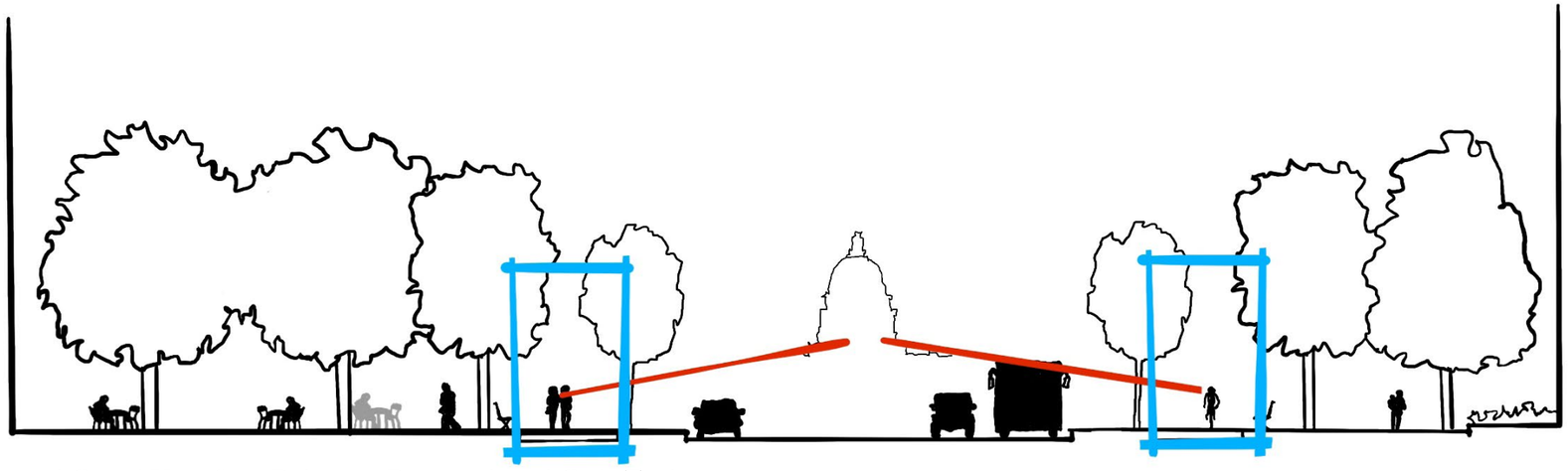
Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — A Framed View of the Capitol for all Users

The street section along the Avenue is where many of the Plan's guiding principles converge. Framing the viewshed towards the U.S. Capitol Building is a key driver. Within the existing conditions, the Capitol viewshed is mainly experienced while in a car or on a bike and is framed by the tree canopy on the north and south side of the Avenue. The pedestrian experience of the viewshed is minimal, primarily while crossing the Avenue from north/south or from select locations within Freedom Plaza. The streetwall varies, especially along the north side of the Avenue, with some building facades closer to the cartway than others.

The north side of the Avenue would be expanded for a pedestrian promenade, which frames the long view to the Capitol for pedestrians. The south side of the Avenue would mirror the promenade with a dedicated protected cycle track, also framing the Capitol view. Within the new proposal, all (pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicle occupants) are provided the Avenue's defining view.



Framed Capital View from Center of Roadway



Framed Capital View from Pedestrian Promenade and Cycle Track

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — A Framed View of the Capitol for all Users



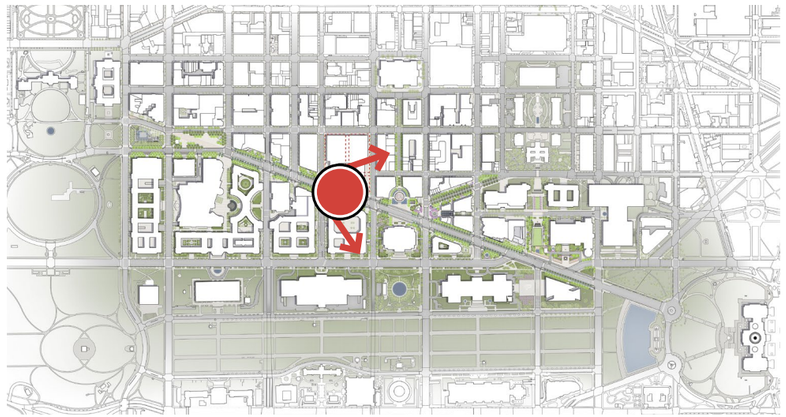
View looking towards Capitol from vehicular experience



View looking towards Capitol from primary pedestrian experience



View looking towards Capitol from primary cyclist experience



Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective renders

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Rightsizing the Avenue

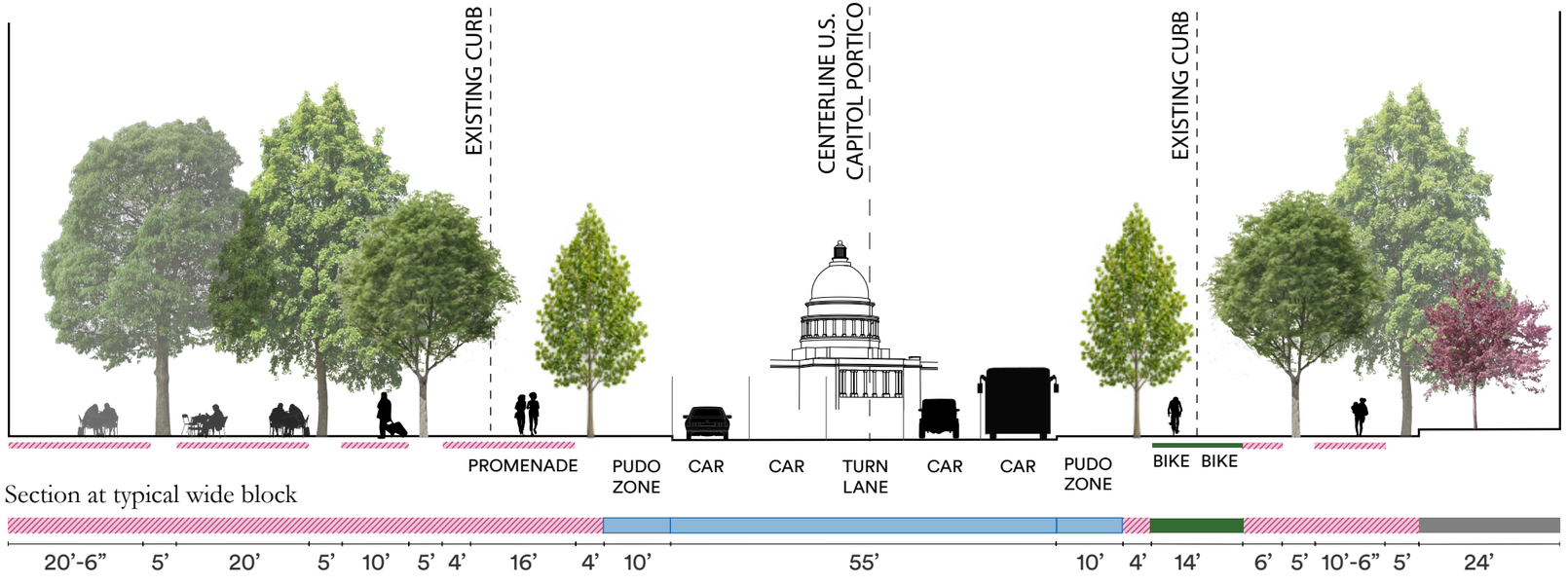
The 2018 Pennsylvania Avenue East of the White House Transportation Study prepared for DDOT served as the primary basis for the determination of the typical cross-section for vehicular lanes in the proposed corridor. The 2018 transportation study recommended that "fewer travel lanes would provide additional space for other modes while still maintaining automobile mobility," with four through traffic lanes determined to be the minimum number of lanes required.

The proposed typical cartway is composed of a five-lane cross-section—four through lanes and a fifth lane to facilitate turning movements. This layout ensures an obstacle-free width that would reduce pedestrian crossing times, accommodate events, and meet the required width for the Inaugural Parade route. Travel lanes are proposed at 11-feet wide, a maximum desired for urban streets that accommodate bus traffic. Immediately adjacent to the lanes of travel, dedicated pick-up/drop-off (PUDO) zones would be periodically located on each side of the Avenue to avoid blocking moving traffic. The width of the PUDO zones is proposed to be between eight and ten feet to accommodate events and for accessibility purposes.

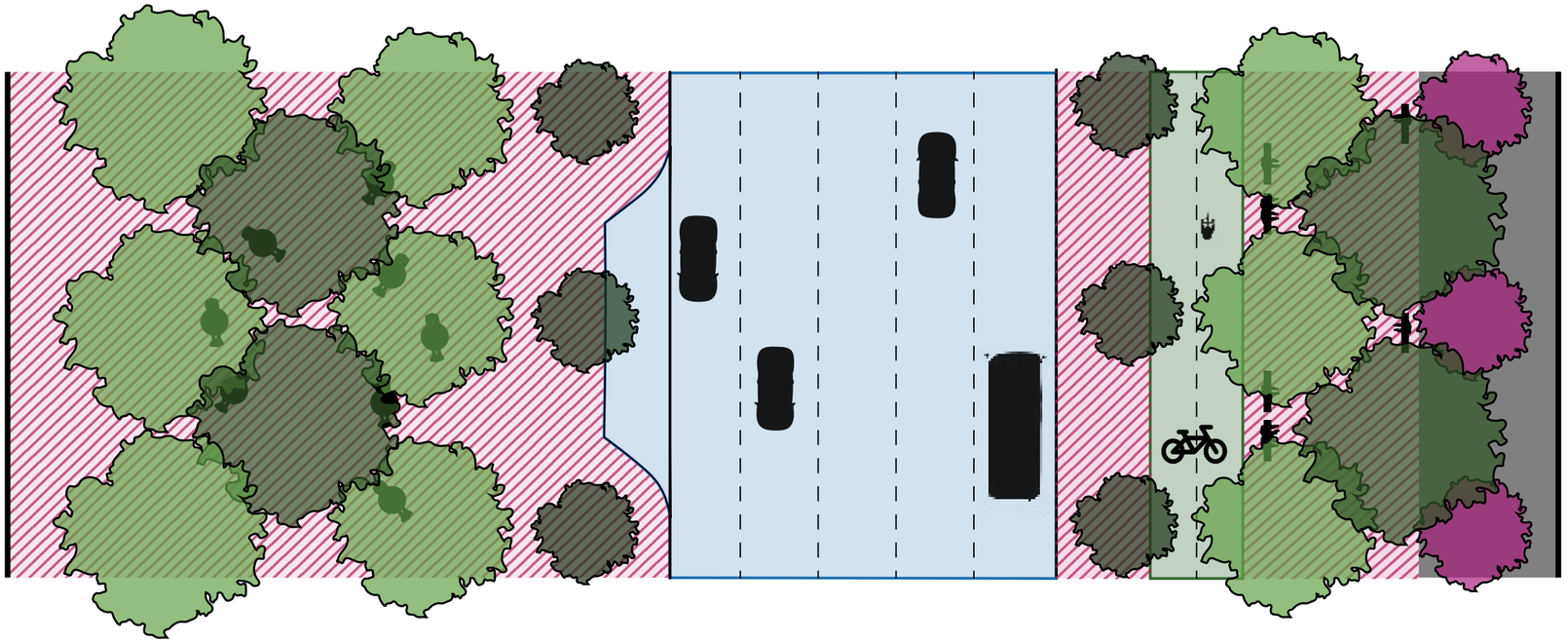
Planning-level traffic modeling using more recent traffic count data from 2026 was used to verify how the Avenue was likely to operate under the proposed design. The modeling results were used to adjust the cross-section and identify critical turning lane locations, while maintaining the best intersection operations performance possible.

A MULTIMODAL AVENUE

The routes identified in Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)'s Better Bus Network were incorporated into the design of the street section. Capital Bikeshare and micromobility locations are expected to occur within the plan area as well. Bike lanes will be shifted from the center of the cartway in the existing condition to the south side of the Avenue and treated as a 14-foot-wide two-way cycle track that is separated from vehicles and delineated adjacent to pedestrians. The sidewalk and the two-way cycle track would be separated by trees or other streetscape furnishings. The placement of the cycle track on the south side considers the larger security demands for government buildings at Federal Triangle, creating a wider setback between vehicular traffic and the building façades. By narrowing the Pennsylvania Avenue NW cartway (curb-to-curb) width from 100 feet to 55 feet, pedestrian crossing distances and overall pedestrian exposure to vehicle conflicts can be significantly reduced.



Section at typical wide block



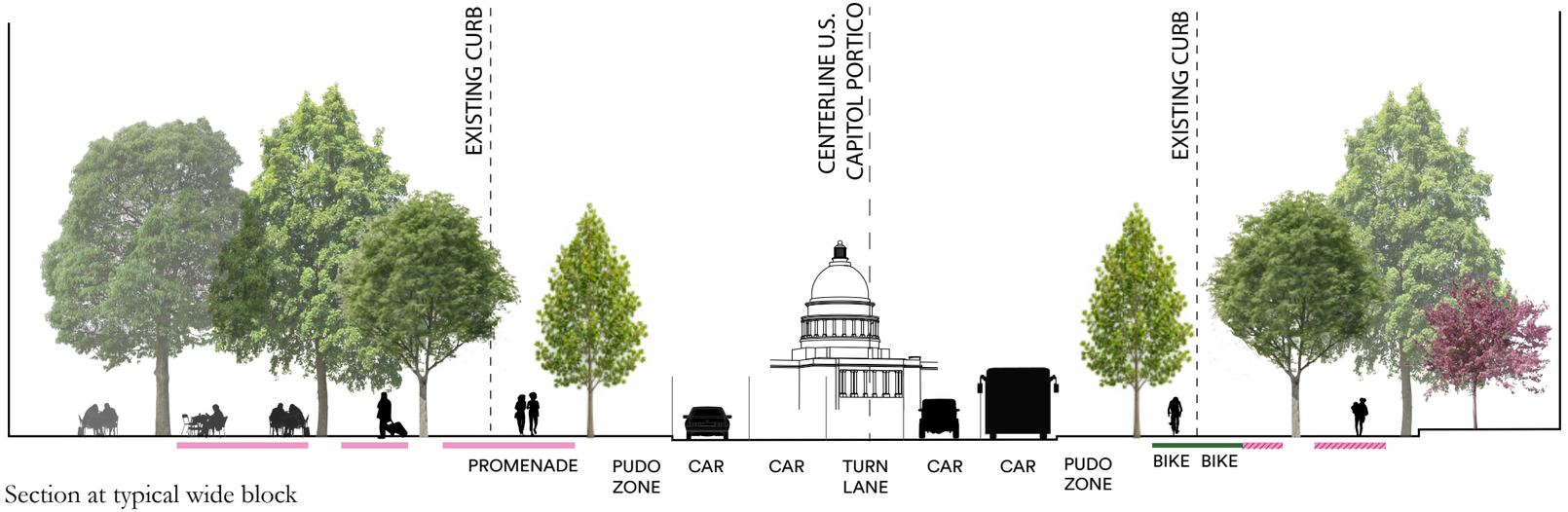
Plan Diagram at typical wide block

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Blocks Vary In Size

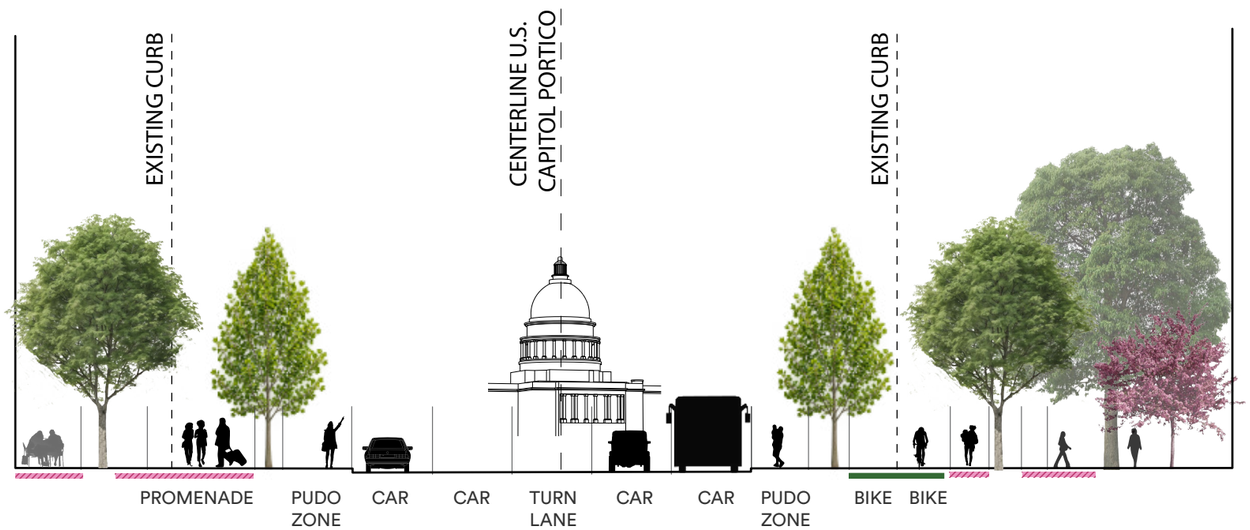
The north side of the Avenue would be expanded for a pedestrian promenade that is 16 feet wide. The promenade supports primary and fast moving pedestrian movement, in addition to secondary circulation paths, the traditional sidewalk at the north side, which varies in width depending on the building façades. The north sidewalk would support additional activation and programming at certain blocks. To the north of the promenade, a five-foot wide tree pit is provided for the first row of canopy trees, separated from the promenade by a four-foot-wide area of specialty paving that further delineates a furnishing amenity zone. Seating elements, bike racks, litter receptacles, and other site elements would be located within this amenity zone.

The Plan includes a minimum of two rows of trees on each side of the Avenue. The planting character should be continuous along the Avenue with breaks in the rhythm occurring at the L'Enfant Plan cross streets and larger public spaces. Trees would also be planted to frame but not obscure entrances to buildings. Seen from each end of the Avenue, the trees would form a uniform frame for views to the U.S. Capitol and the U.S. Treasury Building and White House grounds. Depending on building setback dimensions, between one and three rows of trees would be planted adjacent to the buildings in a staggered grid similar to the existing tree spacing found on the Avenue. Trees would include an even mixture of native canopy trees. Where allowable without disrupting the larger canopy volume, trees within the grid would be removed to support programmatic activations such as pavilions, outdoor dining, and recreation or to support the inclusion of native understory flowering trees. The canopy trees would be a variety of species, providing a range of texture and seasonal interest along with shade and greater biodiversity.

More details on the tree planting strategy are included on the following page.



Section at typical wide block

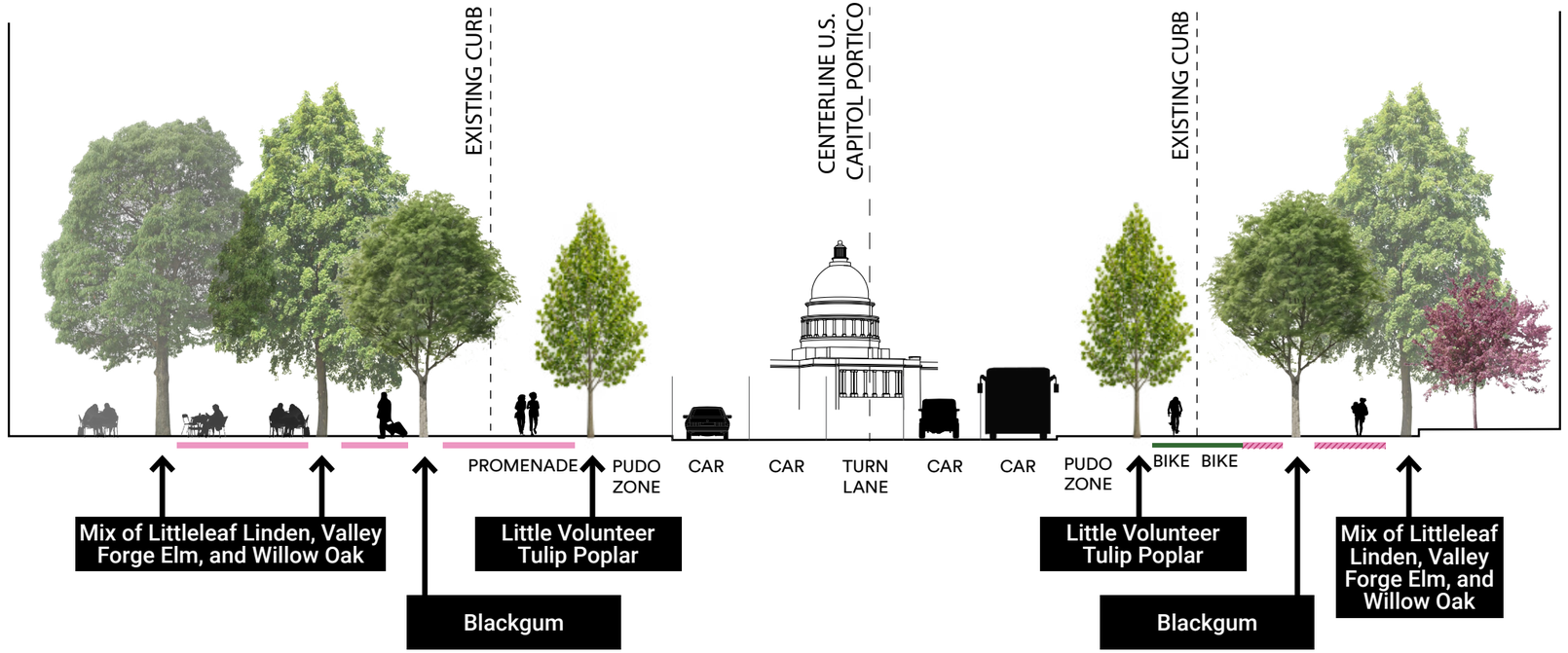


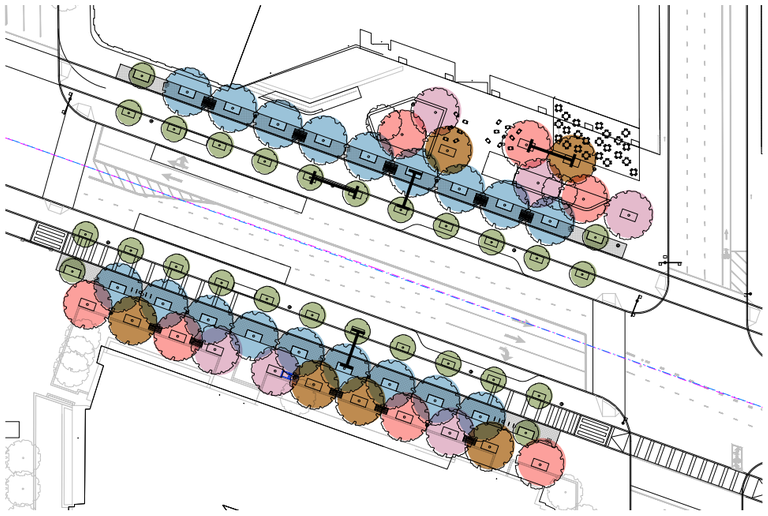
Section at typical narrow block

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Planting Strategy

The Capitol viewshed is framed by an allee made up of a canopy tree, Nyssa sylvatica (Blackgum), and a smaller signature tree. The signature tree species was selected as a medium-sized tree with a smaller spread to support the Capitol viewshed. Multi-season interest is especially important for the signature tree, and Liriodendron tulipifera 'Little Volunteer' (Little Volunteer Tulip Poplar) was selected for its unique late spring flowering and brilliant yellow fall foliage. Additionally, Little Volunteer tulip poplar has a naturally centralized and straight trunk, creating a structured rhythm and formality along the Avenue in winter months. The selected signature tree is a dwarf cultivar of Liriodendron tulipifera. Tulip poplars have a long and important history within the American story. Tulip poplar was a favored tree by Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, with both planting tulip poplars within Monticello and Mount Vernon. Because of their naturally straight trunks, tulip poplars were used by the native people of Tsenacommacah for the dugout canoes that were vital for travel, trade, and fishing along the complex river networks of what is now known as the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, including the Potomac River.

All trees were selected for their robust durability within the District and arborists were consulted within NPS and the District's Urban Forestry Department. Native and drought tolerant species with multi-season interest and symbolic or narrative ties to the District were prioritized. Canopy trees were selected for a medium-sized spread that will offer ample shade in warmer months and a beautiful mixed fall foliage ranging from red to yellow.

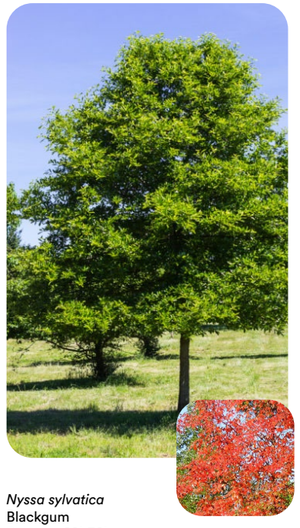




CANOPY TREE PALETTE



Liriodendron tulipifera 'Little Volunteer'
Little Volunteer Tulip Poplar
Spread : 18'-20'
Height : 30'-35'



Nyssa sylvatica
Blackgum
Spread : 20'-30'
Height : 30'-50'



Tilia cordata
Littleleaf Linden
Spread : 30'-40'
Height : 50'-70'



Ulmus americana 'Valley Forge'
Valley Forge Elm
Spread : 50'-60'
Height : 60'-70'



Quercus phellos
Willow Oak
Spread : 40'-70'
Height : 40'-70'

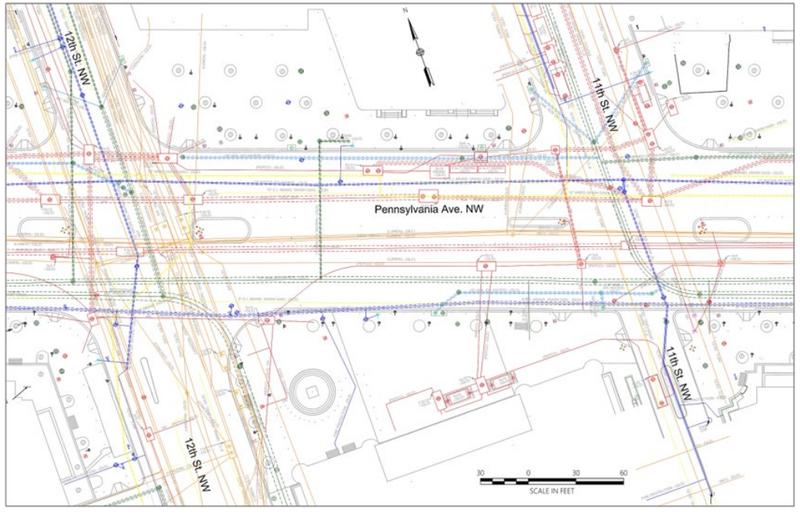
Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Utilities and Underground Infrastructure

The Avenue has numerous physical issues from aging infrastructure, underfunding (leading to deferred maintenance). Underground is a complex mess of below grade utilities and aging infrastructure, including some dating back to 1870s, that will need a comprehensive modernization.

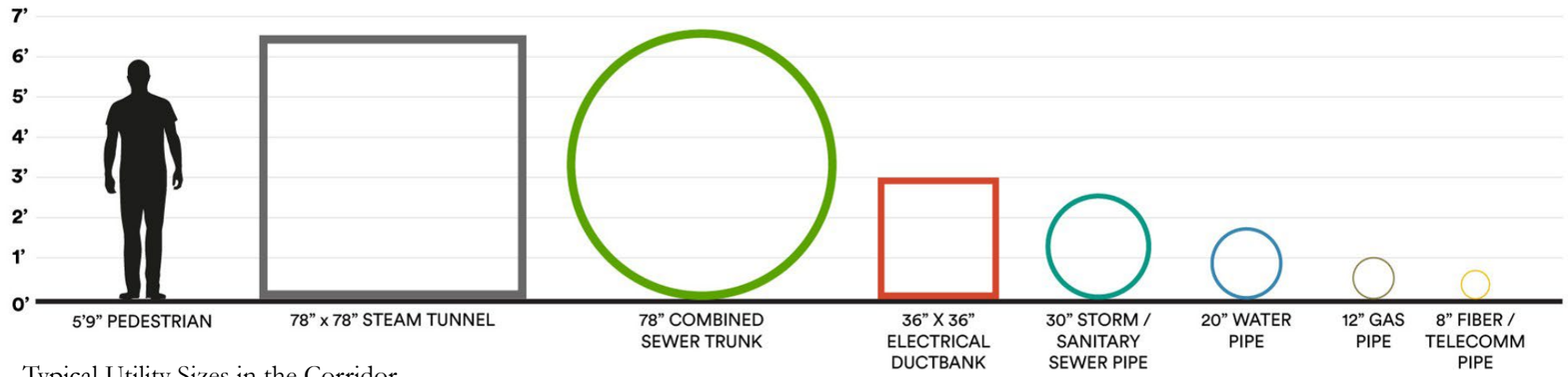
A detailed utility survey is underway and will inform final design to allow for modernized utilities, better soils for trees, and upgraded systems to support the Avenue and events.



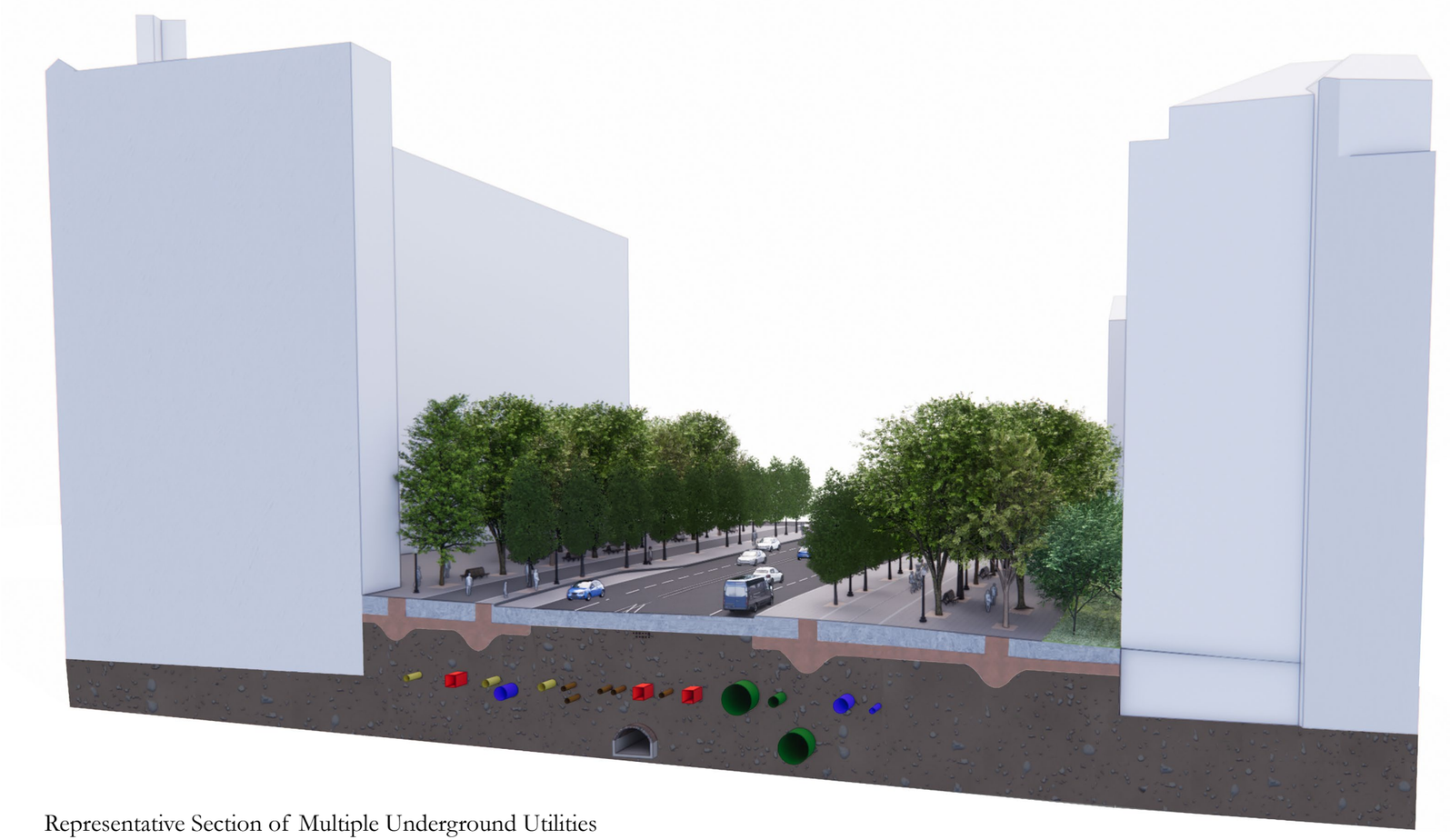
Aging Infrastructure Conditions (some dating to the 1870s)



Snapshot of Utility Complexity in the Avenue



Typical Utility Sizes in the Corridor



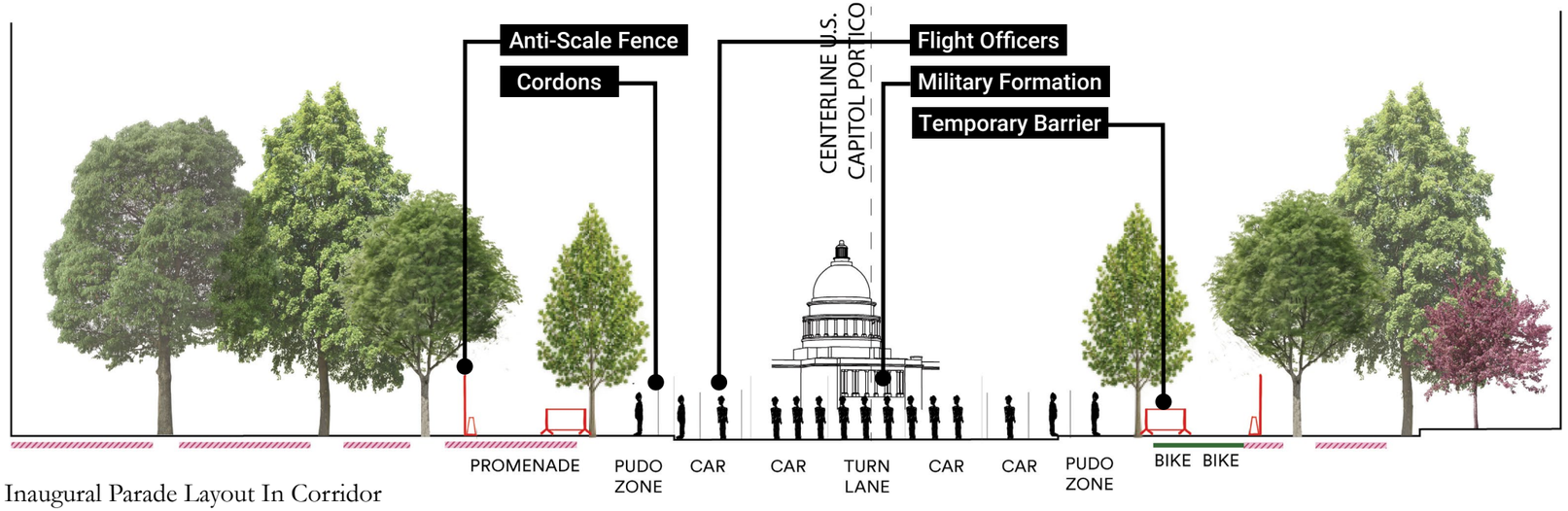
Representative Section of Multiple Underground Utilities
(exact locations and depths to be determined from ongoing survey)

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Accommodating the Inaugural Parade

The inaugural parade occurs every four years along Pennsylvania Avenue and is an important facet of the symbolic nature of Pennsylvania Avenue. Ensuring the continued use of the corridor for this function is a paramount goal of the Plan. In the proposed design, the inaugural parade is accommodated in a similar manner as it is today as it moves between 3rd Street NW and 13th Street NW, apart from the curb relocation in areas where the cordons of officers stand stationary. This approach has been initially approved by the Military District of Washington. Further coordination will continue with the Metropolitan Police Department, Military District of Washington, and others.

A 72-foot clear zone with no vertical obstructions has been provided. Curbs have been deemed acceptable within this clear zone. Examples of vertical obstructions include trees, light fixtures, bus shelters, site furnishings, etc. Within that 72-foot clear zone, a 48-foot walking zone with an evenly graded ground plane is provided. The military formations, floats, bands, presidential motorcade, and all other moving portions of the inaugural parade would all fit within the cartway extents up to the stationary flight officers (72-foot clear zone). Within the rightsized street section, the two layers of cordons would be stationed partially in the cartway and partially within the PUDO zone. As such, some officers within these cordon lines would be elevated by approximately 6", at sidewalk elevation. Beyond those officers, the movable temporary barriers and anti-scale fence barriers would sit within the expanded sidewalk areas and create the necessary multiple layers of security beyond the 72-foot clear zone.

In its current condition, existing infrastructure elements that fall within the parade's path including traffic signal posts, bollards, and bike barriers must be removed and reinstalled for each inaugural. As part of the rightsizing of the vehicular cartway and the reduction of curb-to-curb width, traffic signals are no longer proposed in the center of the street section. Rather, traffic signals will be located behind the curbline at intersection corners and no longer require removal for every inaugural or other major events requiring clear zones in the roadway. Shifting the bike lanes to the south and creating a two-way cycle track at pedestrian level has a similar effect, as the rubberized bike lane dividers can be permanently eliminated and no longer need to be removed for every inaugural.



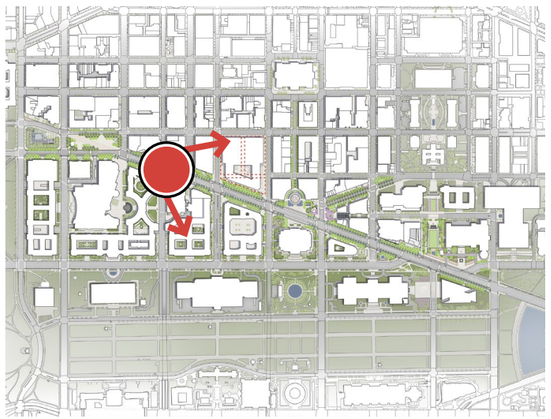
Inaugural Parade Layout In Corridor


Presidential Inaugural Parade (U.S. Army image public domain/Sgt. George Huley)

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Accommodating the Inaugural Parade



Rendering of Inaugural Parade in Winter



Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective rendering

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Ceremonies and Demonstrations on the Avenue

Conceived of as a physical and symbolic link between the executive and legislative branches of the US government, Pennsylvania Avenue has served as a central stage of political power, public celebration, mourning, and protest, attracting every walk of citizen, statesmen, and visitor alike. In daily life, it has long served as a place of work and business as well as a place of lodging and amusement. For people of all backgrounds, it is a place for the nation to express emotions ranging from joy and celebration to grief and anguish. It is a place to commemorate history, witness the present, and challenge and inspire the future.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the Avenue largely functioned as the city's main street, accommodating the city's market and many businesses essential to everyday life.

Beginning in the McMillan Era and continuing to present day, the Avenue has become an important venue for peacefully assemble and protest. In 1913, the National American Woman Suffrage Association organized a massive march for voting rights along Pennsylvania Avenue the day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Though the first organized march of protest, known as Coxey's Army, occurred in 1894, the suffrage march solidified the use of the Avenue for First Amendment gatherings. Other large protests include civil rights demonstrations; anti-war protests (Vietnam and Iraq); and protests for the environment, labor rights, and LGBTQ+ rights. In the fall of 1969, up to 500,000 people marched in the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam. Counter-inaugural marches were also held to protest the war at President Nixon's 1969 and 1973 inaugurations.

Somber moments of national unity and reflection have included state funeral processions of six Presidents, including those for President Lincoln (1865), President Kennedy (1963), and President Carter (2025).

Over time all such events have shaped the meaning and significance of the Avenue, reflecting the nation's culture and values as a public space and link between the government and the people.



President Lincoln funeral procession, April 19, 1865
(Brady-Handy photograph collection/Library of Congress)



Example of First Amendment activity on the Avenue, "Women Strike for Peace", August 26, 1977 (Diane L. Kuzio/Smithsonian Institution)



President Carter funeral procession, January 7, 2025



Farmers driving tractors at night on Pennsylvania Avenue, as part of an American Agriculture Movement rally, 1977 (Library of Congress)

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Events

The Avenue has served as the stage for a multitude of events that celebrate our Nation and the District in moments of joy and mourning. The primary framed viewshed of the U.S. Capitol Building and the secondary framed views of other federal buildings like the National Archives, National Gallery of Art, and the Portrait Gallery, create iconic backdrops for concerts, festivals, parades, marathons, and demonstrations alike. Temporary events and festivals within the urban cityscape create opportunities for jubilant interaction and new ways to occupy public spaces.

Today, the Avenue continues to be a backdrop for daily activities and special programming—from nationally prominent events such as World Pride (2025) to local and regional celebrations, including the Washington Nationals World Series victory parade (2019) or annual running and cycling races, among many others. In 2027, the Avenue will host many of the NFL Draft festivities as Washington welcomes the event to the nation's capital.

However, the complex layering of management and operational jurisdictions resulting from the dissolution of the PADC has prevented events from feeling seamless across the public realm, sidewalk, and vehicular cartway. Existing events on the Avenue itself have often suffered from intense sun exposure and heat radiating from the asphalt. Permanent elements in the existing cartway such as rubberized bike lane dividers, traffic signals, and other vertical elements create barriers and trip hazards during events, frequently causing injuries to event attendees. Additionally, the outdated infrastructure and utilities along the Avenue corridor are often not sufficient to support current event standards. Temporary elements (bathrooms, security, telecom, wastewater hookups, electricity, etc.) can be costly and time consuming to set up for smaller and medium sized events. To increase event quality, quantity, and scale, these issues must be addressed.



Navy Memorial Flags Salute (US Navy Memorial)



World Pride Festival, June 7-8, 2025 (Capital Pride)



Red Bull Showrun, April 20, 2024



Nationals World Series Victory Parade, November 2, 2019

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Events

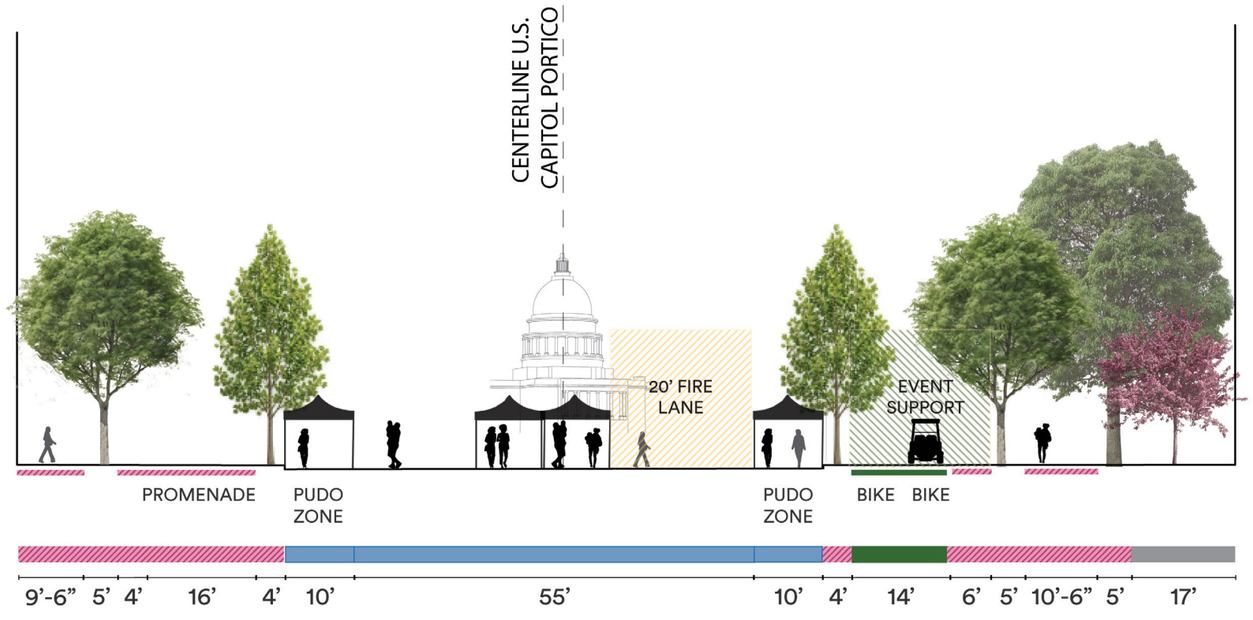
The dimensions of the corridor under consideration have been calibrated to work with a typical event set-up of four rows of tents with a 20-foot fire lane. This flat event space utilizes the pick-up/drop-off (PUDO) areas; therefore on the Eastern End, where the larger events are most likely to occur, the PUDO areas are much longer than other blocks to accommodate more tents in this more frequently used event space.

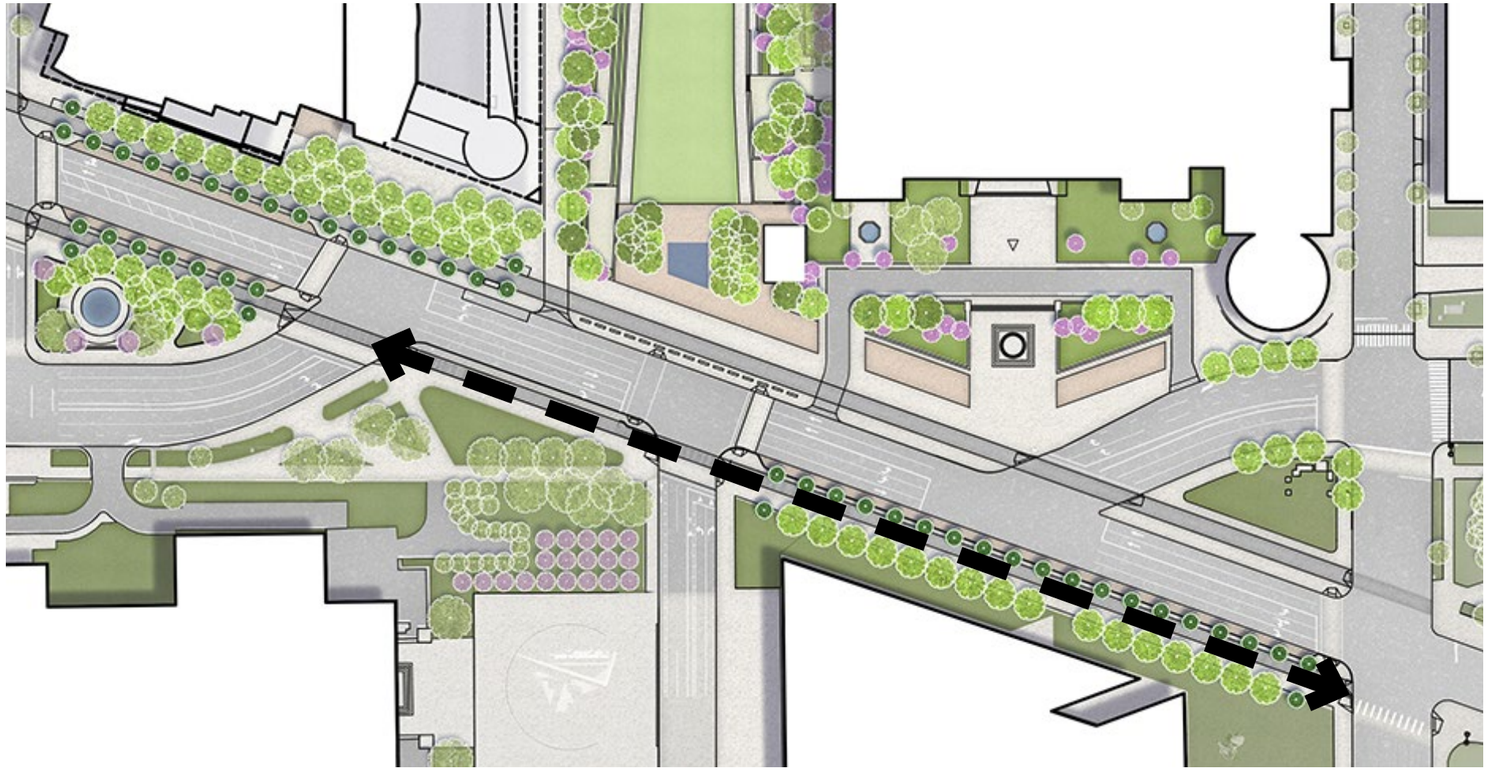
A 20-foot fire lane is accommodated between the rows of tents and the bike lane could be utilized as service access. At the blocks between Constitution and 3rd Street, the cycletrack is proposed to be reinforced to accommodate the fire lane needs to allow for more flexible set-up for events, especially those with stages.

EVENT DRIVERS

- There are a number of north-south streets that are emergency routes and must remain clear for most events (especially 7th and 14th Streets)
- There is a desire for the Avenue to accommodate larger stages
- A 20’ fire lane is critical and required for all events
- Integrated infrastructure (power, Wi-Fi, comfort stations, wastewater hookups) at areas of high event usage could reduce the need for temporary and costly site elements
- Primary safety for attendees must be considered with vehicle ram barriers. Additional security screening is required for some events (especially national security events such as the presidential inauguration)
- The standard 10’x10’ tent is also an important building block to event layouts
- Separating service lanes from event patrons is a desire for event producers
- Permanent elements in the roadway frequently cause injuries to event attendees (such as the curb barriers for the bike lanes and the traffic signals in the center of the street today)
- During hot events, trees or temporary structures can provide shade but must not block clear sightlines to the stage or main attraction

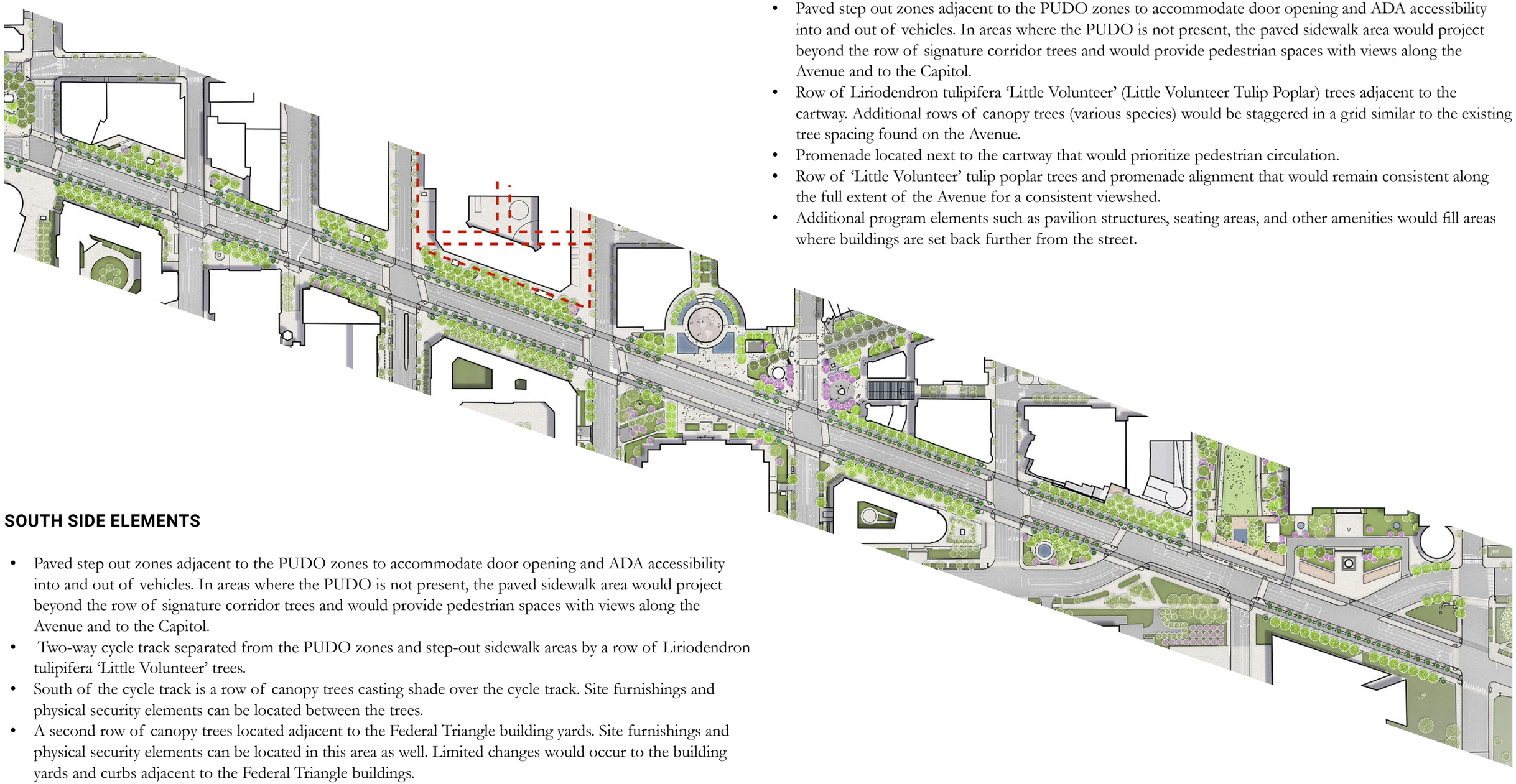
Potential Event Set-up Section





Potential Fire Lane on Reinforced Cycle Track (between 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue)

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — Summary of Elements



NORTH SIDE ELEMENTS

- Paved step out zones adjacent to the PUDO zones to accommodate door opening and ADA accessibility into and out of vehicles. In areas where the PUDO is not present, the paved sidewalk area would project beyond the row of signature corridor trees and would provide pedestrian spaces with views along the Avenue and to the Capitol.
- Row of Liriodendron tulipifera 'Little Volunteer' (Little Volunteer Tulip Poplar) trees adjacent to the cartway. Additional rows of canopy trees (various species) would be staggered in a grid similar to the existing tree spacing found on the Avenue.
- Promenade located next to the cartway that would prioritize pedestrian circulation.
- Row of 'Little Volunteer' tulip poplar trees and promenade alignment that would remain consistent along the full extent of the Avenue for a consistent viewshed.
- Additional program elements such as pavilion structures, seating areas, and other amenities would fill areas where buildings are set back further from the street.

SOUTH SIDE ELEMENTS

- Paved step out zones adjacent to the PUDO zones to accommodate door opening and ADA accessibility into and out of vehicles. In areas where the PUDO is not present, the paved sidewalk area would project beyond the row of signature corridor trees and would provide pedestrian spaces with views along the Avenue and to the Capitol.
- Two-way cycle track separated from the PUDO zones and step-out sidewalk areas by a row of Liriodendron tulipifera 'Little Volunteer' trees.
- South of the cycle track is a row of canopy trees casting shade over the cycle track. Site furnishings and physical security elements can be located between the trees.
- A second row of canopy trees located adjacent to the Federal Triangle building yards. Site furnishings and physical security elements can be located in this area as well. Limited changes would occur to the building yards and curbs adjacent to the Federal Triangle buildings.
- Between the two rows of canopy trees is the primary southern pedestrian circulation route with a consistent width similar to the existing primary walk found on the Avenue today.

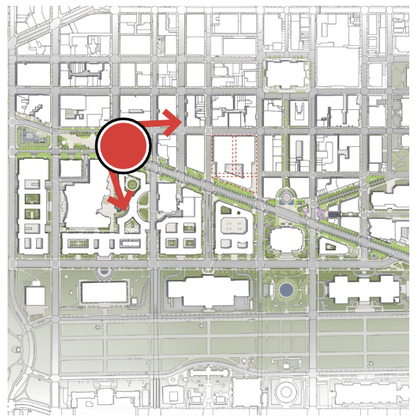
Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — North Side Experience



View looking towards Capitol from primary pedestrian experience



Existing view at similar location



Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective renders

Corridor (3rd Street to 13th Street) — South Side Experience



View looking towards Capitol from primary pedestrian experience



Existing view at similar location



Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective renders

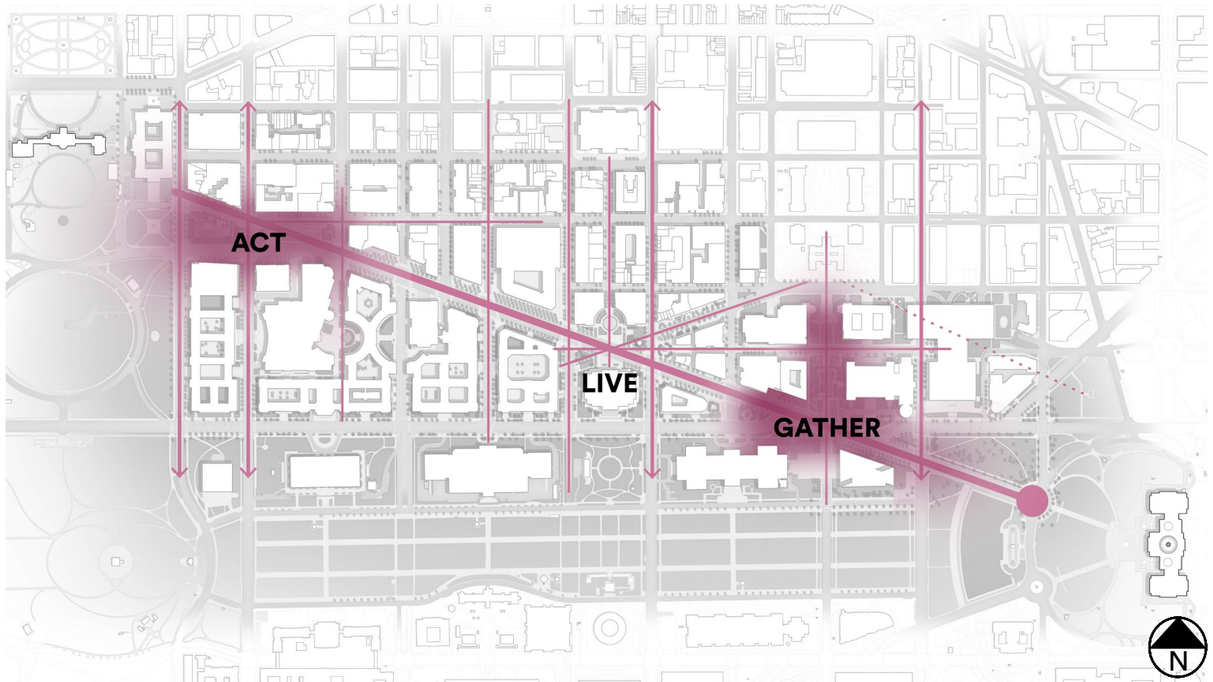


MAJOR PUBLIC SPACES

Major Public Spaces

This Plan prioritizes how people experience the Avenue when walking between the White House and the Capitol and between the National Mall and downtown, while accommodating all other modes of travel. The Plan allows for moments that invite pause, provoke thought, and promote human connection. That is where democracy lives, in the streets and parks, in conversations and protests, and in the quiet dignity of presence. A unique element that sets Pennsylvania Avenue apart from other major cities is the layered histories of place. The Avenue and its public spaces as a cultural landscape represents the American story just as much as it represents the District's story. Both aspects of its DNA must be present and balanced to achieve a successful experience. Residents and visitors alike must feel equally welcome and invited into the participation of public space in the plan area. The sense of place should feel unique to a streetscape within the District without feeling like any ordinary streetscape and public realm. Pennsylvania Avenue must be an extraordinary and long-lasting experience and interpretive themes should explore the Avenue's significance within the country and the District.

The key public spaces have unique identities and functions that, when combined, contribute to the overall goals for the Avenue. The corridor includes the cartway, sidewalks, street trees, and building walls. The Capitol view-shed is framed by these components, in particular the building walls and the tree canopy. The parks and plazas of the public realm are distinct and are not defined by the Capitol viewshed of the Avenue itself, but support its use by providing more spaces for urban life and daily activities. They exist just off the Avenue but contribute to the overall experience along it. The adjoining land uses, location, configuration and use of the public spaces inform the themes of ACT, LIVE, and GATHER. The corridor forms the structure in which the three public spaces below are woven to create the rich fabric of the plan area. The Plan establishes consistency in design along Pennsylvania Avenue essential for creating a grand identity that also functions well for all users.



At the Western End, ACT reinforces the history of demonstrations in this location. Pennsylvania Avenue and Freedom Plaza have served as a backdrop for some of the nation's and the District's important First Amendment expressions.

At the Market Square Crossroads, LIVE focuses on the vibrancy of daily urban life. Here, celebration of the burgeoning residential community is carried through neighborhood-focused interventions and gateway moments to downtown D.C. or along the art spine from the National Portrait Gallery and down towards the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden and Hirshhorn Museum.

At the Eastern End, GATHER refers to gatherings of all scales, from quiet respite at John Marshall Park among a group of friends to spectacle-scale events like a large concert with the backdrop of the Capitol Building and a crowd that spans to 7th Street NW and between 4th Street NW up through John Marshall Park. The Eastern End encourages coming together to celebrate and mourn as a city and a country.

WESTERN END

Western End

The Western End public space includes the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park and Freedom Plaza, approximately from Pennsylvania Avenue South to Pennsylvania Avenue North between 15th Street NW and 13th Street NW. The Western End is the current-day terminus of the Pennsylvania Avenue view corridor and is surrounded by President's Park to the west; the Willard Hotel, the JW Marriott, and the National Theatre to the north; and the Wilson Building (DC Mayor and Council offices) and Federal Triangle to the south. Presently, the inaugural parade travels along Pennsylvania Avenue south of Freedom Plaza and the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park and north along 15th Street NW. Freedom Plaza is an important site for demonstrations due to its proximity to the Wilson Building, the large expanse of paved area, and proximity to the National Mall. The Western End is described by the term ACT, primarily focused on democratic expression, first amendment activities, community activations, and nearby theater/performing arts uses (such as the National Theatre).



Existing Conditions: Freedom Plaza's large expanse of paving supports events such as First Amendment activities, but can also be hot for event attendees.

GOALS FOR THE WESTERN END PUBLIC SPACE INCLUDE:

- Maintain an appropriate route for the inaugural parade, minimizing turns where possible
- Relieve stress on the National Mall for demonstrations and other planned events
- Introduce shade or other amenities to create a more welcoming public space
- Celebrate the Capitol viewshed

WHAT WE HEARD FROM NCPC / CFA COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

- Literal or symbolic diagonal gesture desired, including the inaugural parade path
- General Casimir Pulaski sculpture should remain in place as a prominent feature
- Maintain open, flexible space with shade for events and demonstrations
- Plaza should feel safe for pedestrians
- Skateboarding community expressed concern over changes to the cultural skate spot at "Pulaski Park" (northeast area of the existing Freedom Plaza)

DESIGN UPDATES SINCE CONCEPT REVIEW (APRIL 2026):

- Selected a preferred alternative that keeps a central plaza with vehicular traffic to the edges, similar to how the roadways are aligned today.
- Developed Freedom Plaza design toward a simplified framework of large flexible central space surrounded by trees, increasing the amount of shade for the central civic space
- Confirmed grading to allow for the inaugural parade to move through the plaza on the historic axis, while providing maximum flexibility for events and public use between inaugurations
- Explored an option for a optional shade structure to be included in the plaza in future design

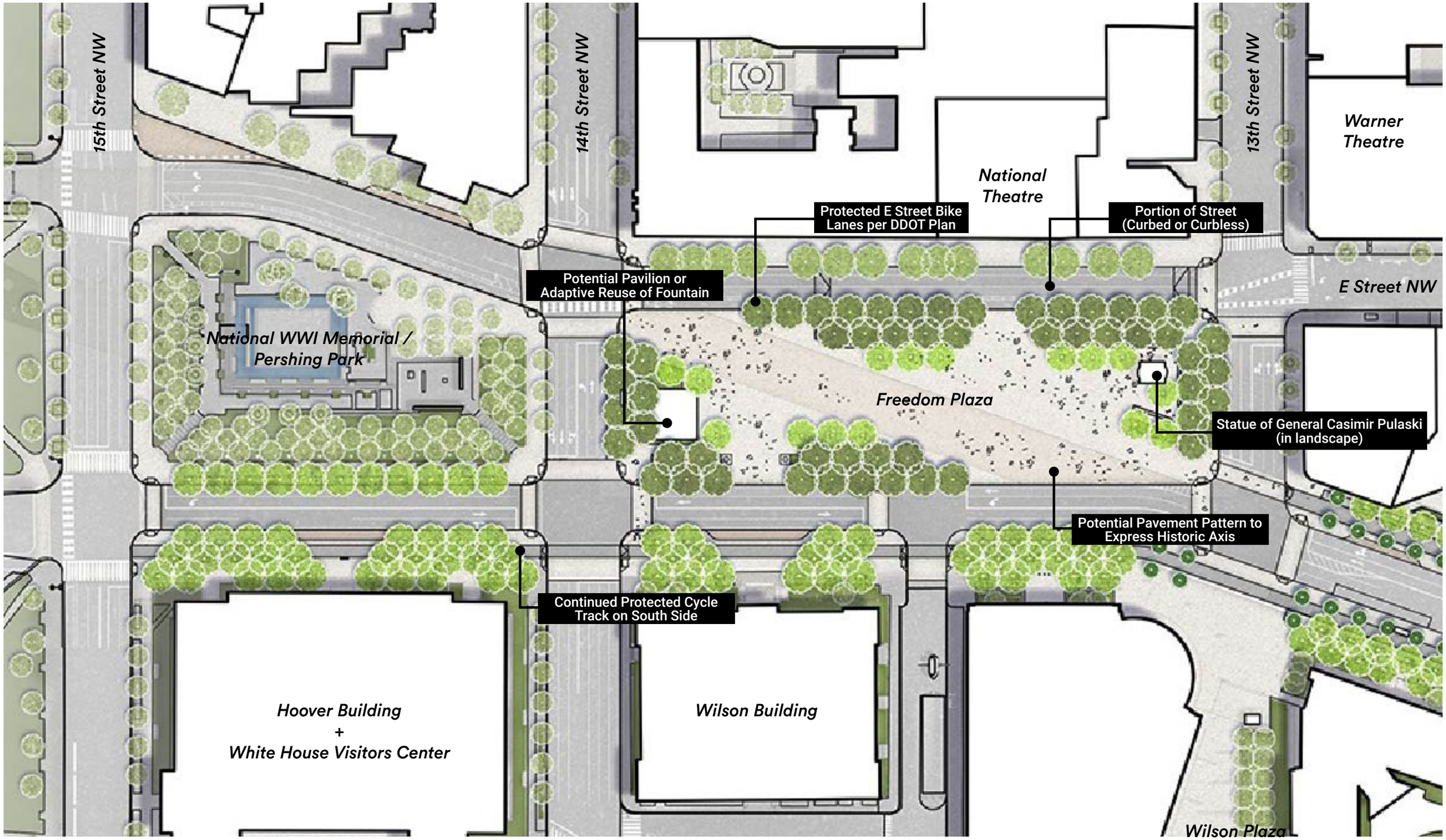


Proposed Aerial for Western End

Western End — Existing Plan



Western End — Proposed Site Plan



Western End — L'Enfant Legacy & Democracy Manifest

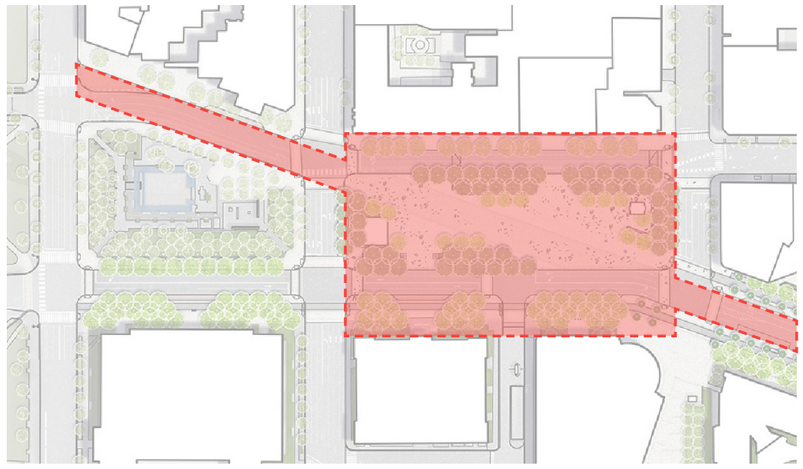
The proposal ensures the historic diagonal axis between two branches of government is visible and allows the inaugural parade to move along that route. Freedom plaza remains as an open square as described in the original L'Enfant Plan. The view from Freedom Plaza also prioritizes the Capitol's presence in this civic space.

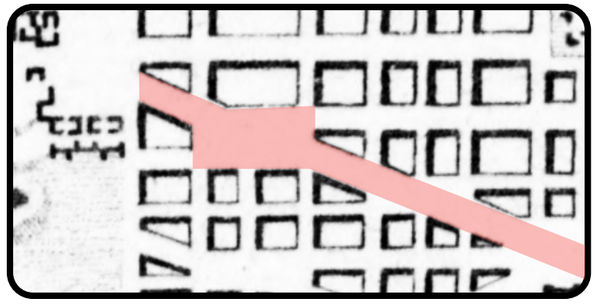
The District of Columbia's primary government uses (Mayor offices and City Council) occupy the Wilson Building south of Freedom Plaza. The framing trees break to allow for democratic expression and first amendment activities for citizen to address the DC government. This also provides a stage for DC to be represented on this historic axis during events, inauguration, and press conferences.

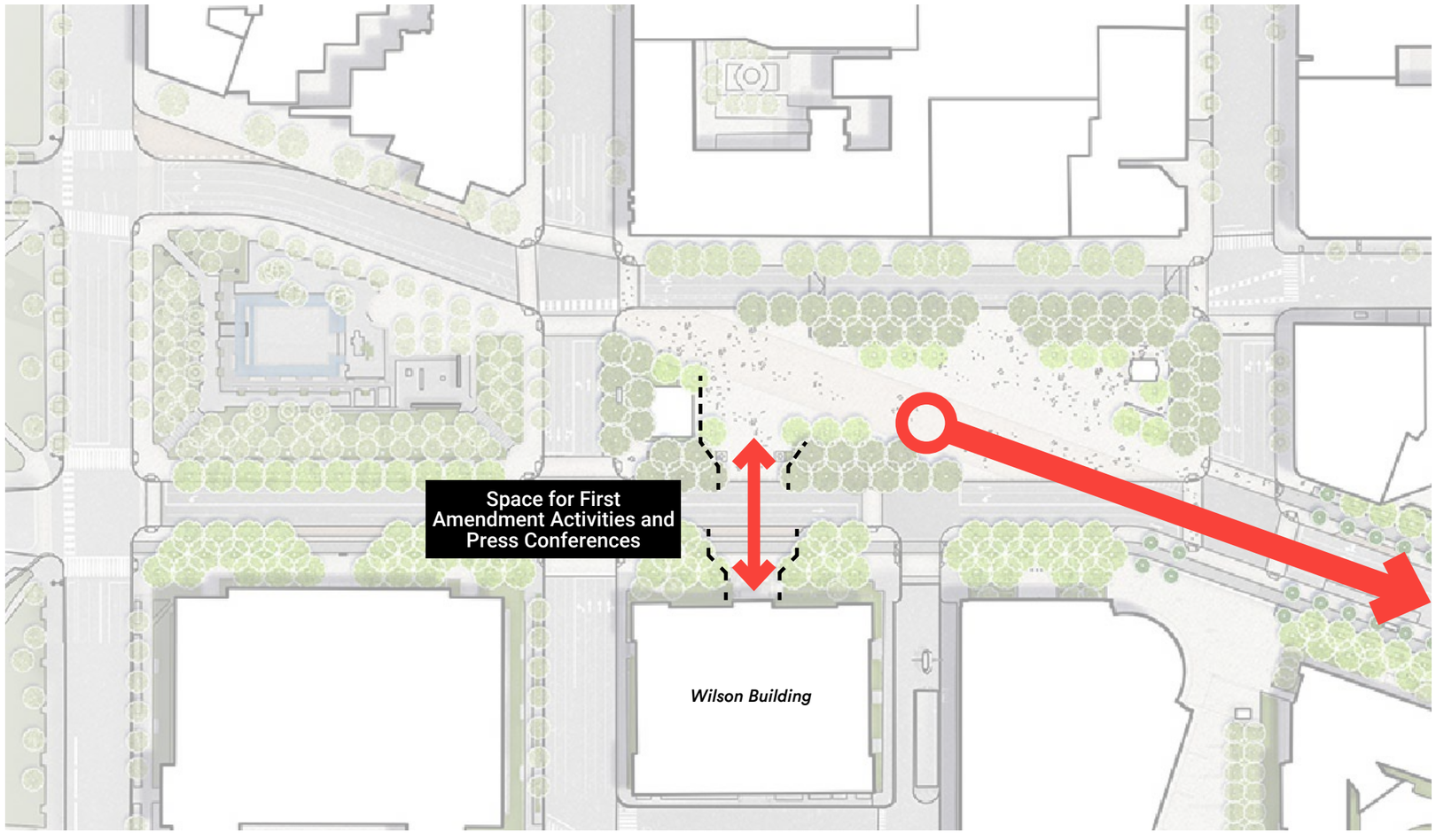
At Freedom Plaza, the inaugural parade route has been modified to move through the plaza from the southeast corner to the northwest corner. This modified parade route reduces the number of 90-degree turns in the existing parade route while reinforcing the symbolic link between the Capitol Building and the White House.

To support this movement and eliminate tripping hazards for marchers in the parade, Freedom Plaza has been brought down to grade. Along the parade route, the plaza dips even lower to a flush condition with the street level creating a slight bowl in the overall grading of the plaza. Physical security elements would surround the plaza to make the large open space feel secure from the surrounding street activity in the cartway. At the northwest and southeast corners—where the inaugural parade would cut through the plaza—the physical security elements would be removable or retractable to allow for seamless access to the site.

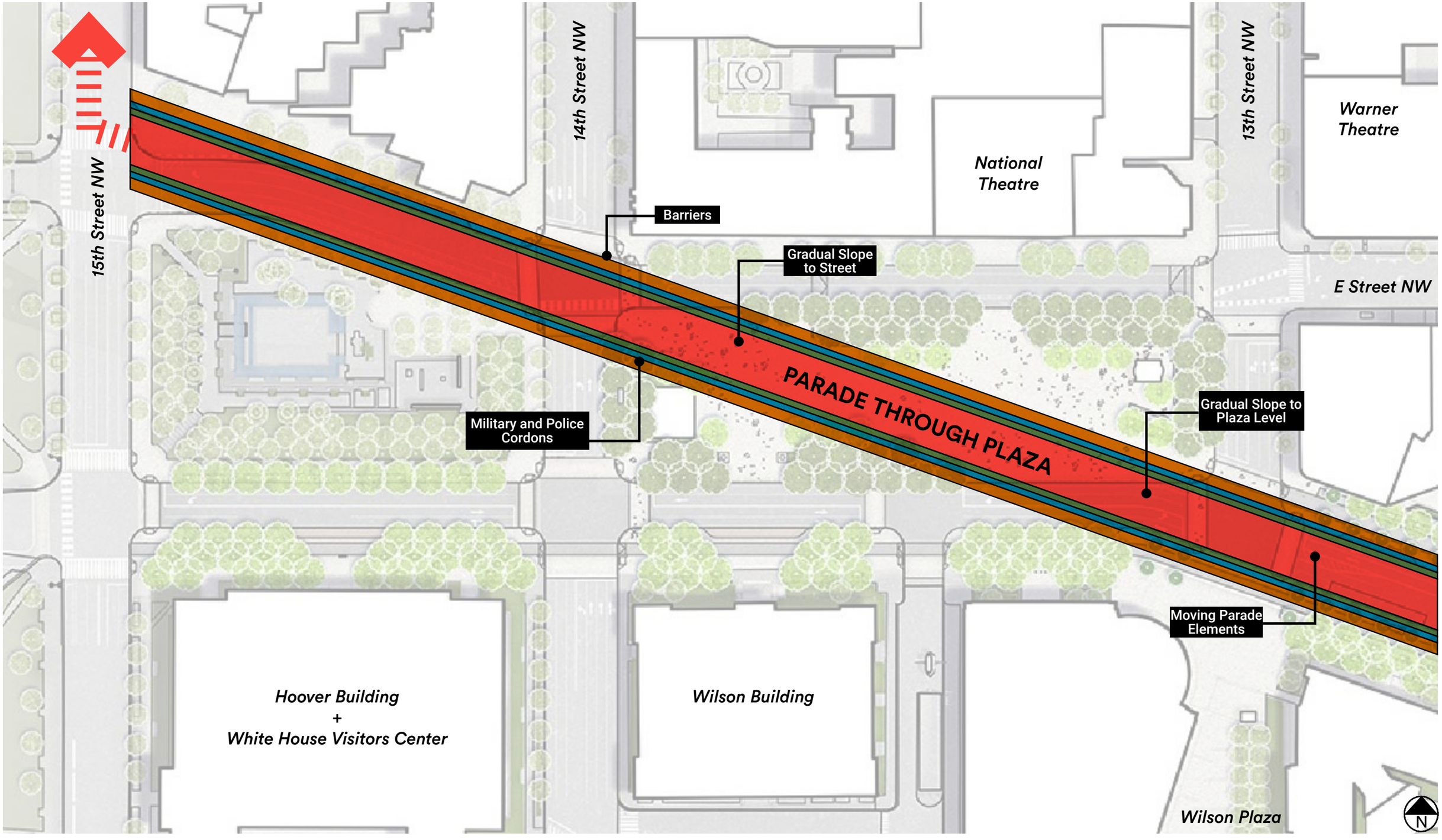
Similar modifications to the southwest corner of the 1400 block of Pennsylvania Avenue would allow for the parade to move through at street level along the diagonal extension from Freedom Plaza. Removable or retractable physical security elements would ensure that outside of the inaugural the space remains secure while allowing the E Street NW extension to connect with 15th Street NW perpendicularly. This configuration is also ideal for vehicle and cyclist safety in daily use.







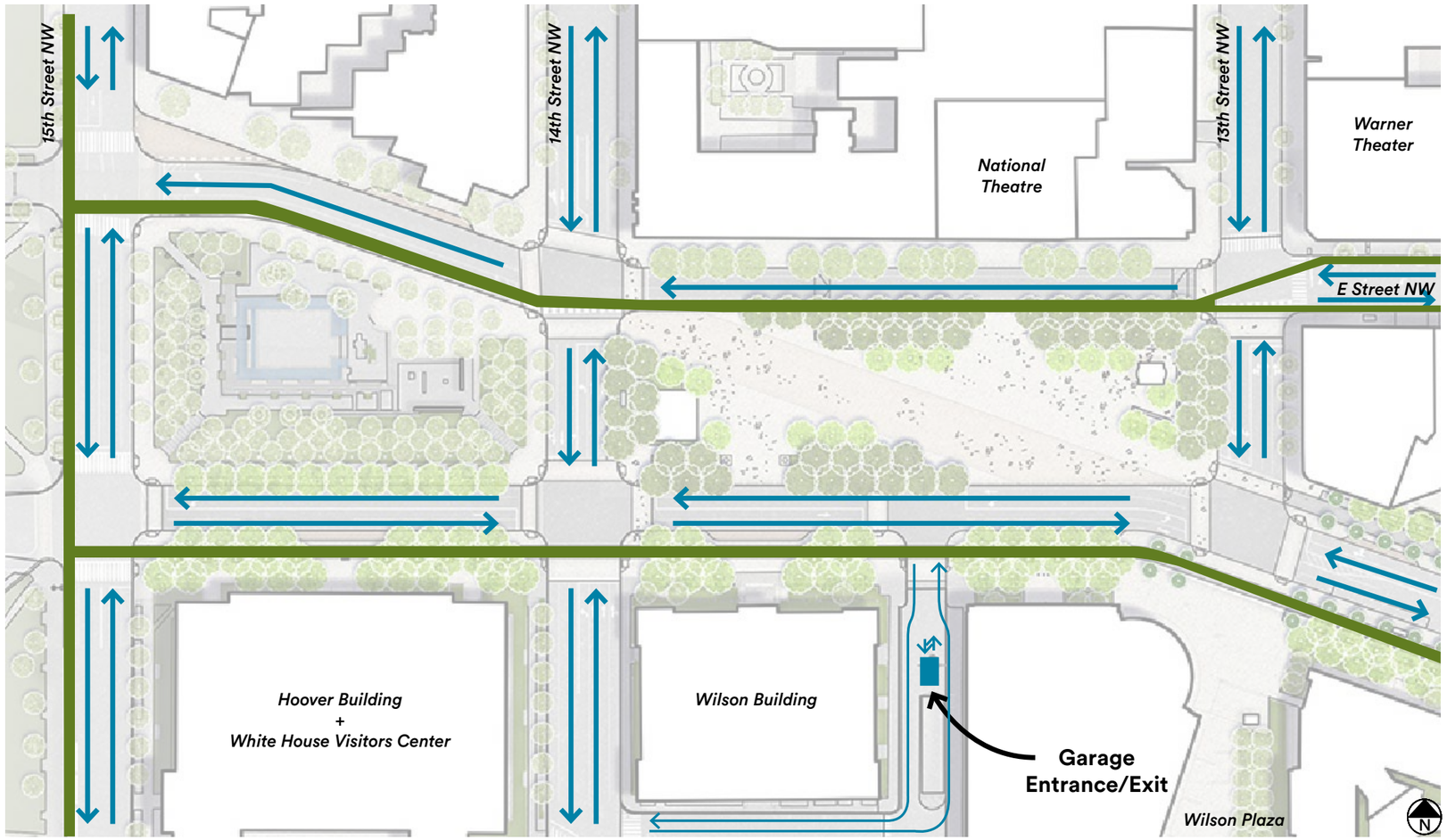
Western End — Inaugural Parade



Western End — Vehicle and Bike Circulation

The Western End maintains the existing traffic pattern of the Pennsylvania Avenue cartway, which proceeds south of Freedom Plaza, with a branch extending to the north as a continuation of E Street NW. Freedom Plaza would be lowered to street level to allow for large events to take place more easily, removing the current design elements that impede accessibility and others, including the fountain, planting beds and urns, and black and white marble paving that shows the L'Enfant Plan of the city. Canopy trees would be planted along the perimeter of the plaza, primarily at the northeast and southwest corners to frame the plaza and create "plaza rooms" that would delineate the Statue of Brigadier General Count Casimir Pulaski on the east side and a new dining pavilion on the west side. A double row of canopy trees lining Freedom Plaza would create a frame around the plaza. The frame of canopy trees would open to acknowledge important viewsheds and connections within Freedom Plaza. One opening would occur at the northwest and southeast corners so as not to obstruct the axial view along the corridor and to meet the clear-width space required for the inaugural parade. The combination of bringing Freedom Plaza down to grade and opening in the canopy trees works together to re-establish the L'Enfant legacy and continue the visual link of Pennsylvania Avenue through the public space.

Like the Avenue's corridor, the southern continuation of the Pennsylvania Avenue cartway, west of 13th Street NW, would be narrowed to four lanes of travel, compared to the six lanes that exist today. E Street and the northern branch of Pennsylvania Avenue would remain open to vehicles traveling west, but would be narrowed to three lanes, supporting two lanes of traffic and one lane of parking, in addition to a two-way bike lane, which will connect to the existing two-way bike lanes east of 13th Street NW. A section of E Street would be table-topped in front of the National Theatre, which would assist with loading and unloading functions, and parking lanes would continue to be present along E Street and Pennsylvania Avenue between 13th and 15th Streets NW. At the south of the plaza, adjacent to the Federal Triangle buildings, new PUDO zones would be introduced along Pennsylvania Avenue to match the regularity of PUDO zones proposed between Third and 13th Streets NW. The two-way cycle track would be located south of the PUDO consistent with the corridor, allowing cyclists to remain off the busy cartway and within a dedicated cycle track.

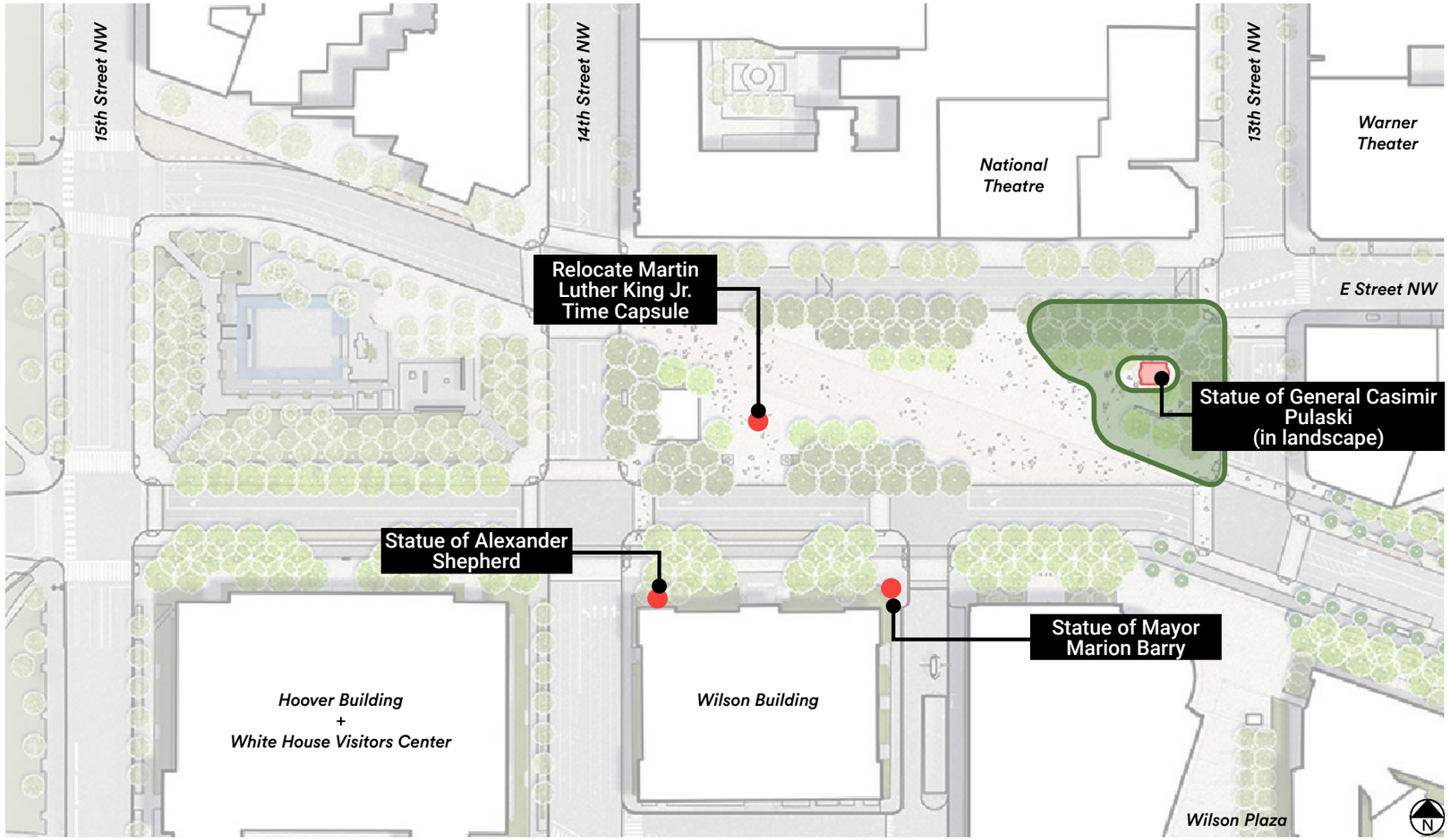


Blue – Vehicular Circulation
Green – Bicycle Circulation

Western End — Memorials and Monuments

A number of existing memorials exist within the Western End including the National World War I Memorial at Pershing Park, the Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski Memorial, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Time Capsule. All of these memorial elements should remain within the Western End, although some may adjust or move from the current locations slightly to accommodate the recommendations within this Plan.

Freedom Plaza is a site for consideration for memorials in the Memorials & Museums Master Plan. This Plan recommends that Freedom Plaza be designed as a permanent location for rotating and temporary monuments, memorials, and art. Recent installations in this location and in other locations in the Monumental Core, such as Beyond Granite, have shown the demand for more flexibility for temporary or time-limited memorial expression.

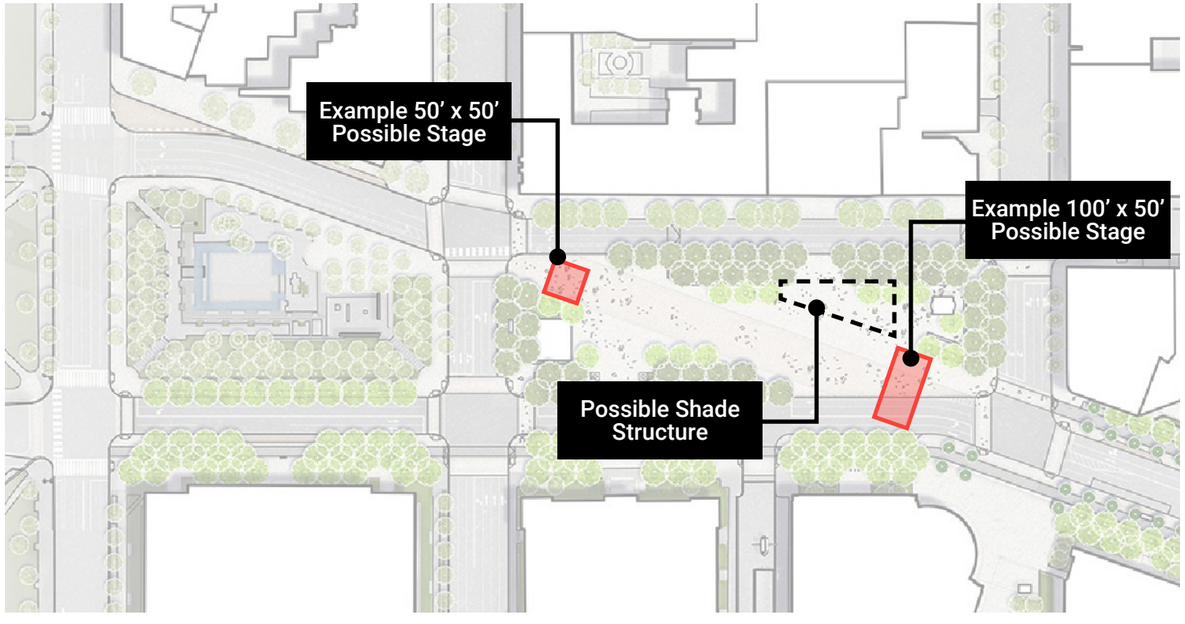


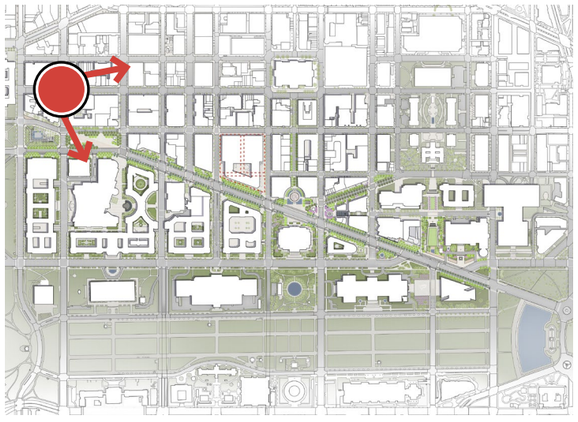
Western End — Events and Activation

Freedom Plaza has historically been used for a variety of events, both local and national in nature. The space has hosted weekly salsa classes, demonstrations related to Home Rule, and everything in between. It is one of the larger NPS owned landholdings outside of the National Mall appropriate in scale and layout to support demonstrations and it should continue to support this use.

The proposed plaza space is fully paved to maximize flexible programming opportunities. Within the larger extents of Freedom Plaza, it is expected that most trees are set in tree grates to support programming. This paved zone is also further framed by a double allée on all sides and linear seatwalls that double as site furniture and security infrastructure, enhancing both the plaza and adjacent streetscapes. The large, open space has been sized to support stage setup at the northwest or southeast corner of Freedom Plaza.

At Freedom Plaza, an option exists to erect a triangular pergola to occupy the north section of the central plaza to support shade during large events and hot summer days. The structure would be positioned so that the acute angle is located at the west corner and the right angle is at the northeast corner. The position and height of the structure would engage with the surrounding trees and be offset from the Pulaski Statue. The structure would be offset from the diagonal centerline through the Plaza so as not to encroach on the view-shed along Pennsylvania Avenue between the Treasury Building and the U.S. Capitol. The materiality of the structure is yet to be determined but would likely be a pergola or lattice-like structure to create additional shade and provide an enlivening architectural element to the public space.





Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective render



Event Setup Layout In Freedom Plaza



MARKET SQUARE CROSSROADS

Market Square Crossroads

Market Square is centrally located along the Avenue. The Market Square Crossroads public space includes Market Square, Indiana Avenue from 7th Street NW to Judiciary Square, the U.S. Navy Memorial, 8th Street NW to the National Portrait Gallery, the Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Metro stop, Indiana Plaza, and the portion of the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor north of the National Archives. The Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Metro stop is expected to receive a standard WMATA canopy structure. Market Square is the primary mixed-use area, themed by the term LIVE, focused on creating amenities for residents, workers, and visitors.

GOALS FOR THE MARKET SQUARE CROSSROADS PUBLIC SPACE INCLUDE:

- Emphasize the Indiana Avenue axis per the L'Enfant Plan
- Support existing and future residents and commercial activity in the area
- Celebrate the connection to downtown D.C. along 7th Street NW
- Increase programming opportunities for daily, weekly, monthly small-scale events or installations
- Honor the history of markets and crossroads

WHAT WE HEARD FROM NCPC / CFA COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

- Indiana Avenue viewshed is valuable
- Minimize intervention on National Archive grounds
- Enhance commercial activation and retail activities as a gateway to downtown
- Create safer crossings (consider a mid-block crossing)
- Find opportunities for art expression

DESIGN UPDATES SINCE CONCEPT REVIEW (APRIL 2026):

- Developed "Gateway to Downtown" proposed expression
- Reduced intervention on National Archives grounds
- Focus on increased commerce



Proposed Aerial for Market Square Crossroads

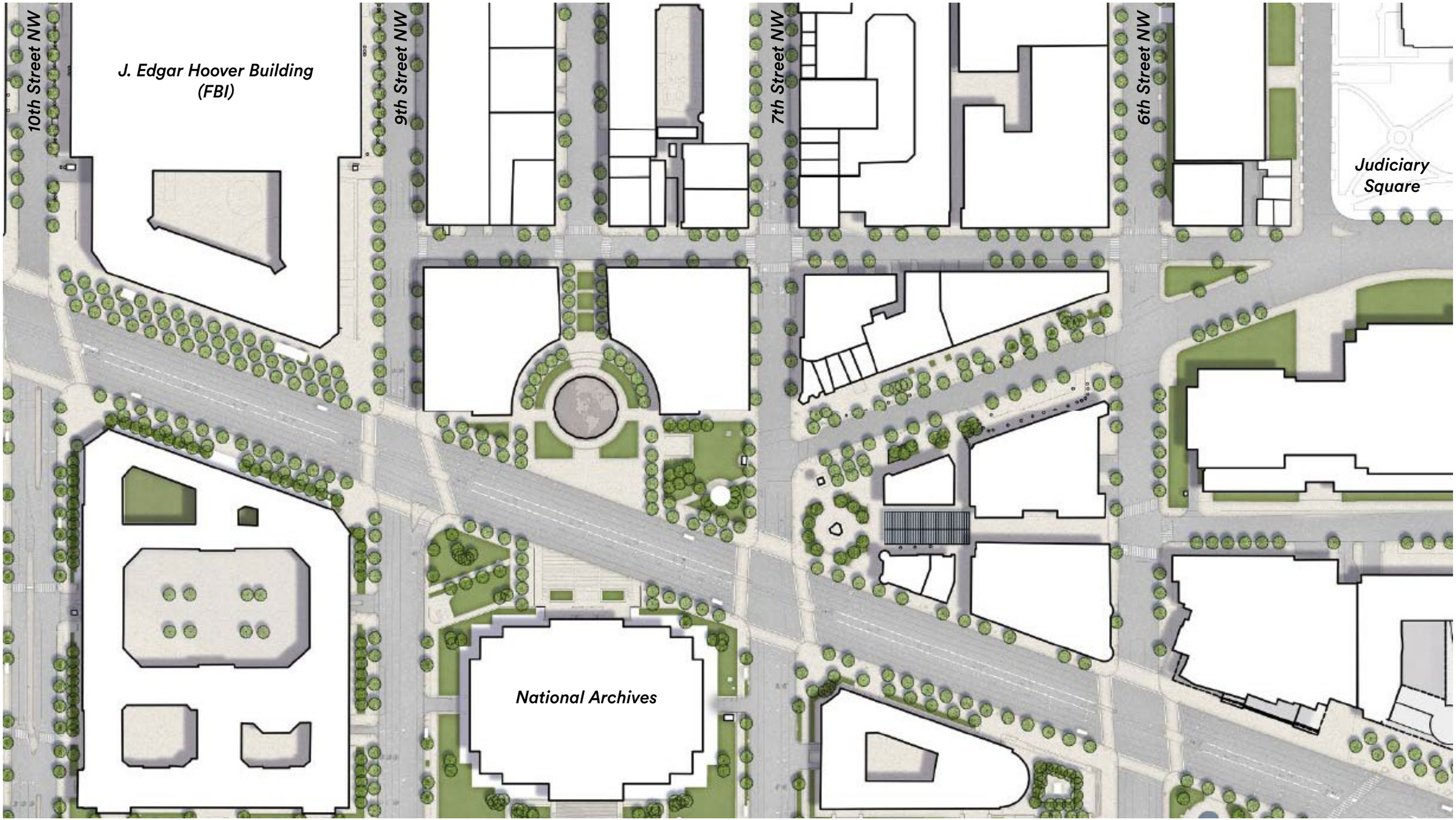
Existing Conditions Images:
(Left) US Navy Memorial including monumental poles;
(Center) Air vents and utility structures above the WMATA Metro station below;
(Right) Monuments and memorials in and around Market Square, including Temperance Fountain and Grand Army of the Republic Memorial, shown.



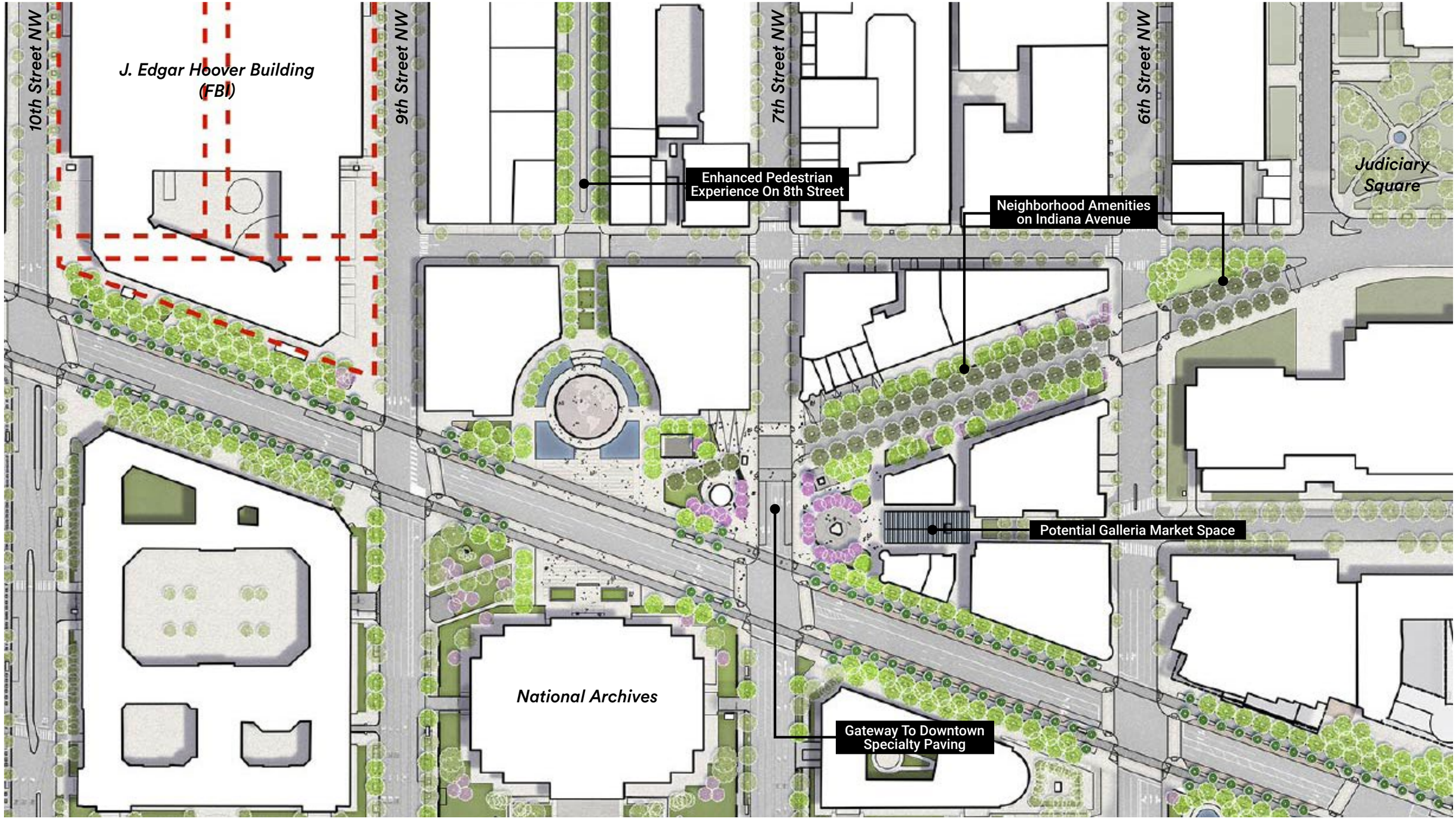




Market Square Crossroads — Existing Plan



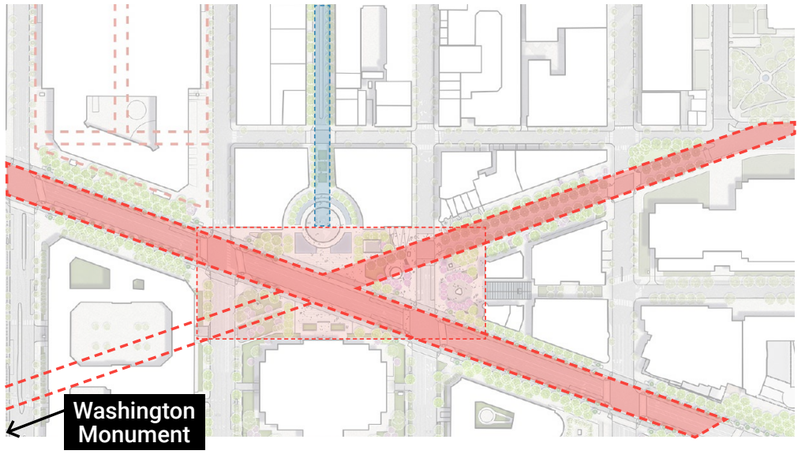
Market Square Crossroads — Proposed Site Plan

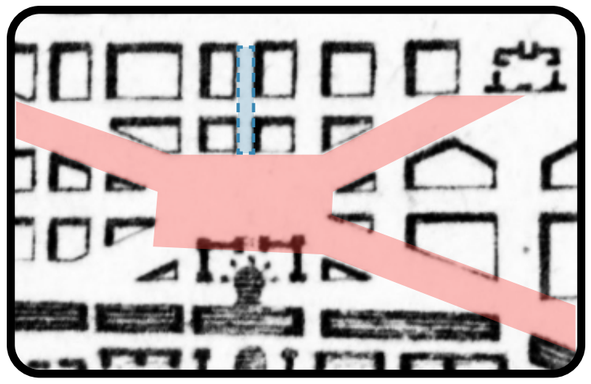


Market Square Crossroads — L'Enfant Legacy

Market Square was a critical space in the L'Enfant Plan. Originally the site of the central market, it has long been associated with the commerce hub of the Avenue. Indiana Avenue connects at this location, and it originally continued to the southwest toward the Washington Monument. At 6th Street and Indiana Ave, the top of the Monument is still visible above the Federal Triangle buildings. The proposal enhances this axis of Indiana with the DC State Tree, Scarlet Oak, which has a bright red expression in the fall.

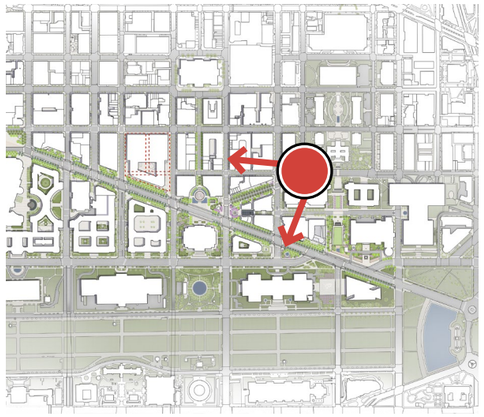
Additionally, 8th Street NW also terminates into the Avenue at this public space and sets the stage for a formal relationship between the facades of the National Archives to the south and the National Portrait Gallery at F Street to the north.







View of Indiana Avenue in Spring

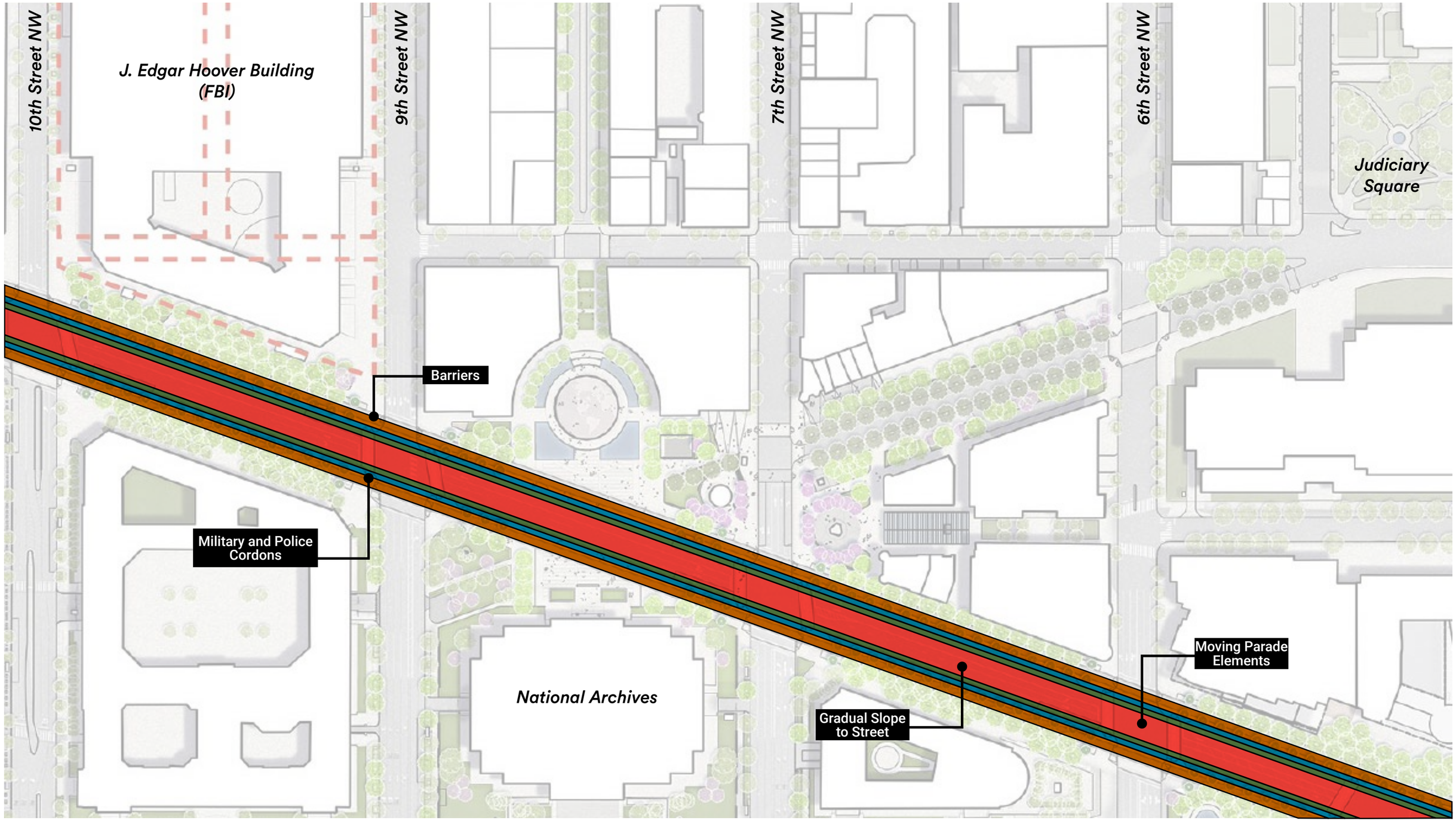


Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective render



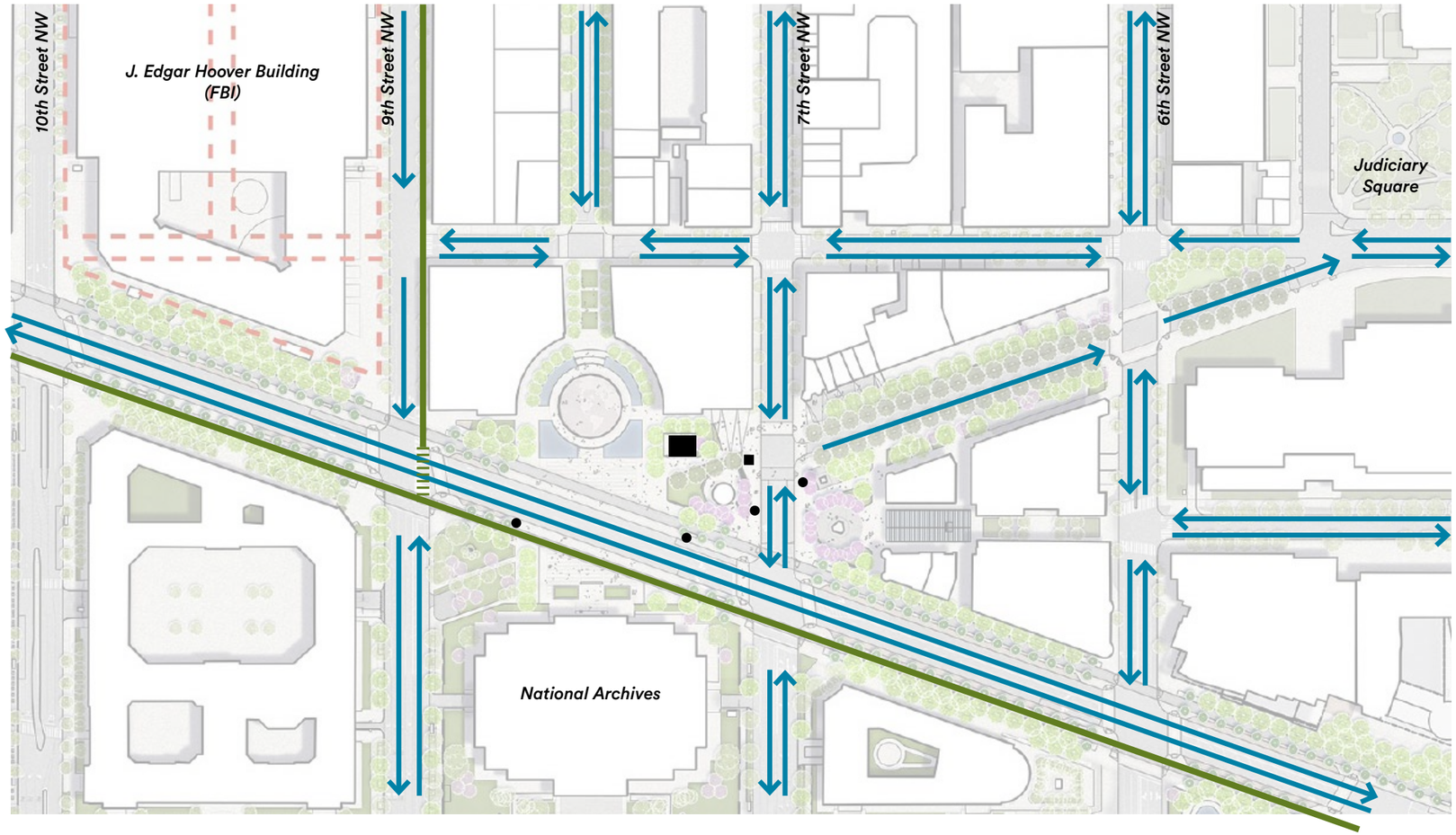
View of Indiana Avenue in Fall

Market Square Crossroads — Inaugural Parade



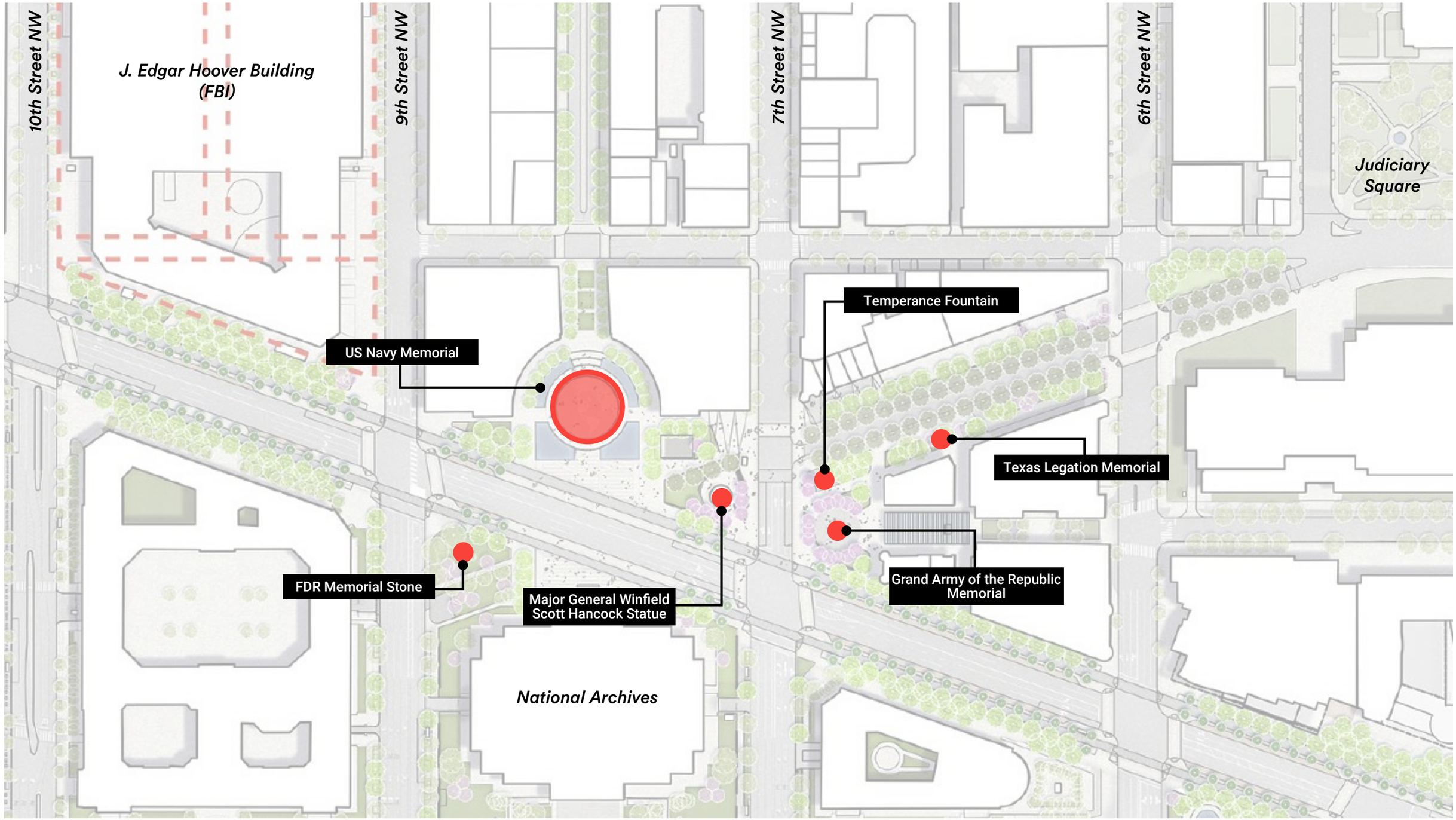
Market Square Crossroads — Vehicle and Bike Circulation

Aside from the changes on the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor itself (described in the "Corridor – 3rd to 13th" section), vehicular and bicycle circulation remains the same in this area.



Blue – Vehicular Circulation
Green – Bicycle Circulation

Market Square Crossroads — Memorials and Monuments

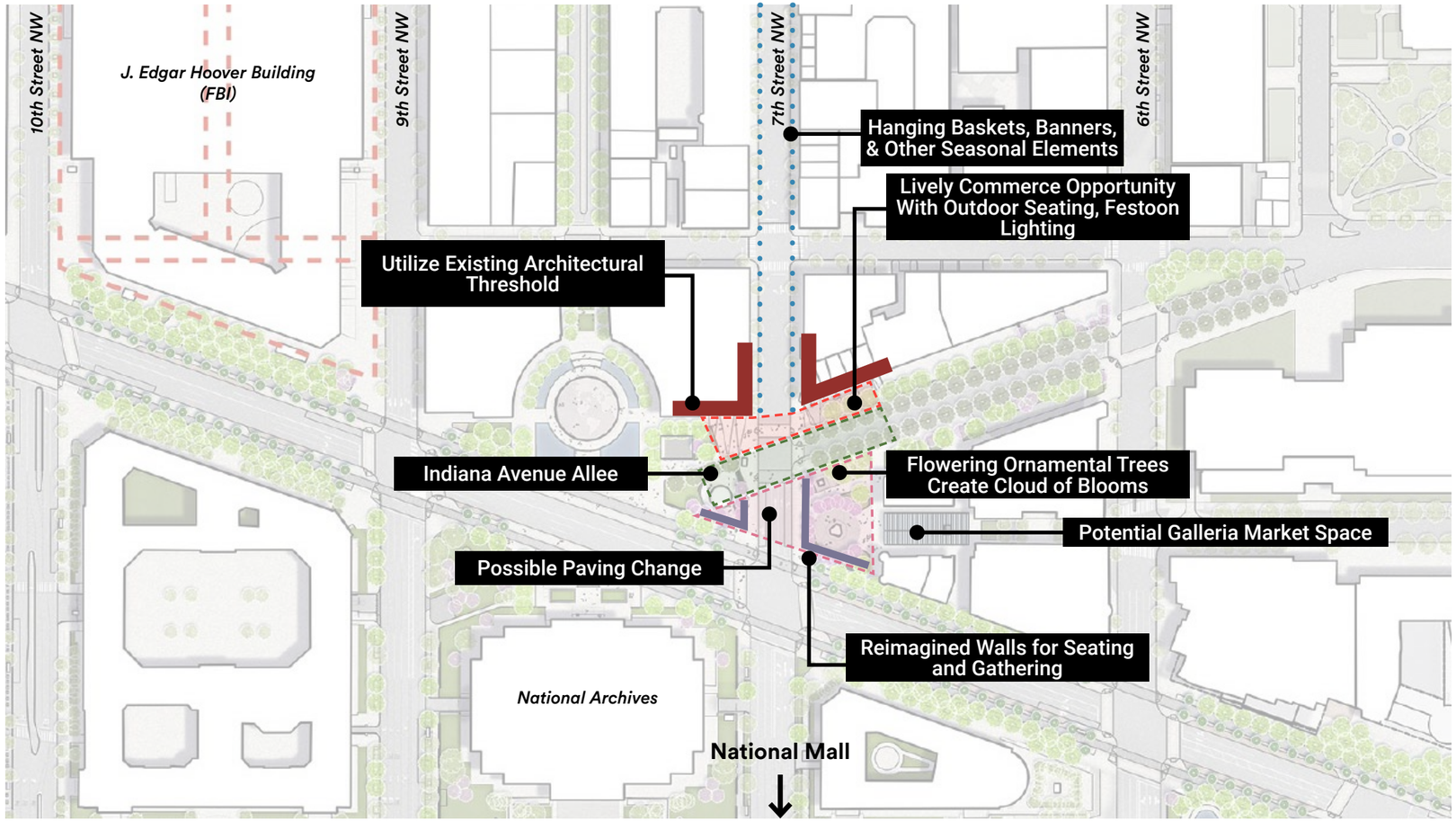


Market Square Crossroads — Events and Activation: “Gateway to Downtown”

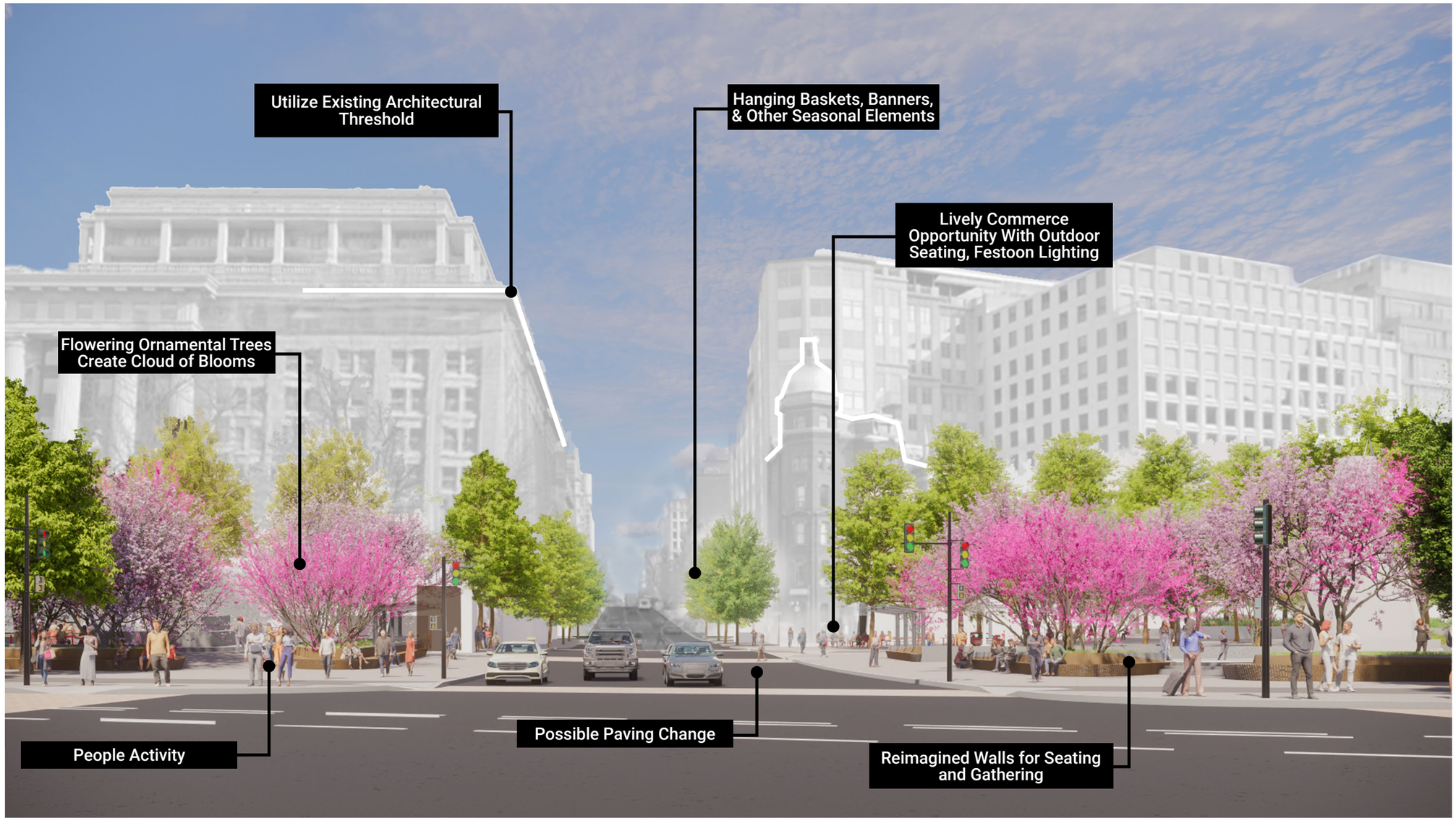
Market Square Crossroads is the public space along the Avenue most likely to be used and activated by residents. Along Indiana Avenue, lively and active public space should be prioritized such as all-ages play, spaces for small gatherings, outdoor seating opportunities, temporary programming opportunities, farmers markets, a dog park, or other neighborhood-scale amenities that residents and visitors can use.

Potential opportunities for commerce include re-enlivening the Navy Memorial storefront, creating a lively commerce opportunity with outdoor seating and festoon lighting along the 7th Street gateway and a proposed galleria near Indiana Plaza. The greatest change in Indiana Plaza would be installation of a free-standing galleria, reminiscent of European shopping galleria.

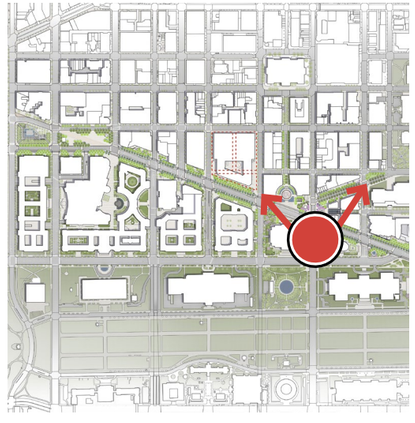
7th Street NW acts as a major thoroughfare and connection to downtown D.C. The stretch of 7th Street NW included within the plan area can draw pedestrian traffic up from the National Mall and towards the commercial activity to the north. This gateway to downtown begins around Constitution Avenue NW and peaks in intensity as 7th Street NW crosses Pennsylvania Avenue. This threshold is read as a multi-layered experience, with human-engaged spaces and high pedestrian activity preparing users for the act of commerce that awaits further north. At the intersection of 7th Street NW and Pennsylvania Avenue, the existing site walls that accommodate the grade change necessary to support planting above the Metro station are reimagined as a custom seating element that flanks both sides of 7th Street NW. The wood materiality brings warmth to the intersection and invites people to gather and to see and be seen when looking towards the Avenue from the National Mall. Rising above this seating element is an ephemeral pink cloud created by a mixture of flowering ornamental trees. This threshold point can be further punctuated with a possible paving change that spans across 7th Street NW. The Indiana Avenue allée would sit immediately behind this first layer, and their brilliant red foliage would create a striking visual element in the fall. The next layer utilizes the existing architectural threshold created by the building wall between the 701 block and the ornamented Victorian buildings along Indiana Avenue in conjunction with lively commerce opportunities along both sides of 7th Street NW. The landscape opens to create flanking garden rooms with outdoor seating, festoon lighting, and site furnishing. The gateway to downtown experience could be further extended through the use of hanging baskets, banners, and other seasonal elements continuing along the visual corridor as the street ascends uphill.



Market Square Crossroads — Events and Activation: “Gateway to Downtown”



Perspective View on 7th Street NW

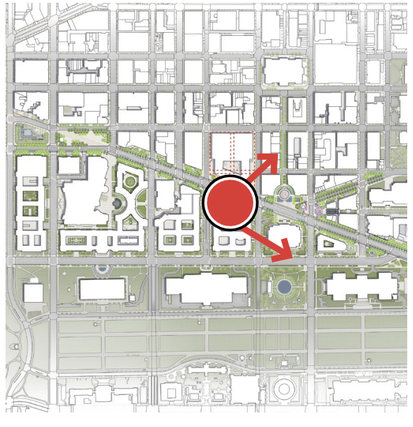


Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective renders

Market Square Crossroads — Events and Activation



Autumn Rendering of Market Square Crossroads with a Cultural Event on Pennsylvania Avenue



Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective renders

EASTERN END

Eastern End

The Eastern End public space includes John Marshall Park, forecourt to the E. Barrett Prettyman United States Court House, and the intersection of Constitution Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue with adjacencies including the District of Columbia Courts and Judiciary Gardens to the north, Architect of the Capitol campus grounds to the east, and the National Gallery of Art to the south. The Eastern End is the primary space for large events and is described with the term GATHER, focused on bringing Washingtonians, Americans, and visitors from around the nation and world together for shared experiences.

GOALS FOR THE EASTERN END PUBLIC SPACE INCLUDE:

- Provide a large, flexible gathering space that can be used in a variety of event setups and daily use
- Preserve and celebrate the 4th Street viewshed towards the District of Columbia Courts (Old City Hall) and National Building Museum
- Reduce or eliminate stairs and visual barriers along the 4th Street viewshed
- Maintain security offsets as needed around buildings such as the E. Barrett Prettyman United States Court House and the Embassy of Canada to the United States.
- Support events currently active on the Avenue, and reduce jurisdictional complexities for future events
- Modernize outdated utilities below-grade and integrate event infrastructure seamlessly
- Activate and program the Avenue appropriately to support daily urban life and tourists alike

WHAT WE HEARD FROM NCPC / CFA COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

- Desire for shaded park space
- Ensure the park and adjacent spaces are more flexible to host events at all scales
- Good possible location for public restrooms
- General support for an option with minimal stairs and walls between public spaces
- Security at Prettyman Courthouse is critical
- Manage change of the Carol R. Johnson 1983 design of John Marshall Park responsibly

DESIGN UPDATES SINCE CONCEPT REVIEW (APRIL 2026):

- Selected a preferred option of the “Hillside Pavilion” that creates a large gathering space at the grade of the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk, surrounded by a park-like amphitheater for shade, and includes an buried support space for events, restrooms, and utilities at the northern end capped with a monumental stair up the 4th Street axis.
- Explored more options for possible event layouts and utilities support
- Explored areas for reusing elements of the Carol R. Johnson designed landscape, including the paved entry plaza (materials and patterning), the wellsprings, and various small-scale features to be reinstalled in the future design

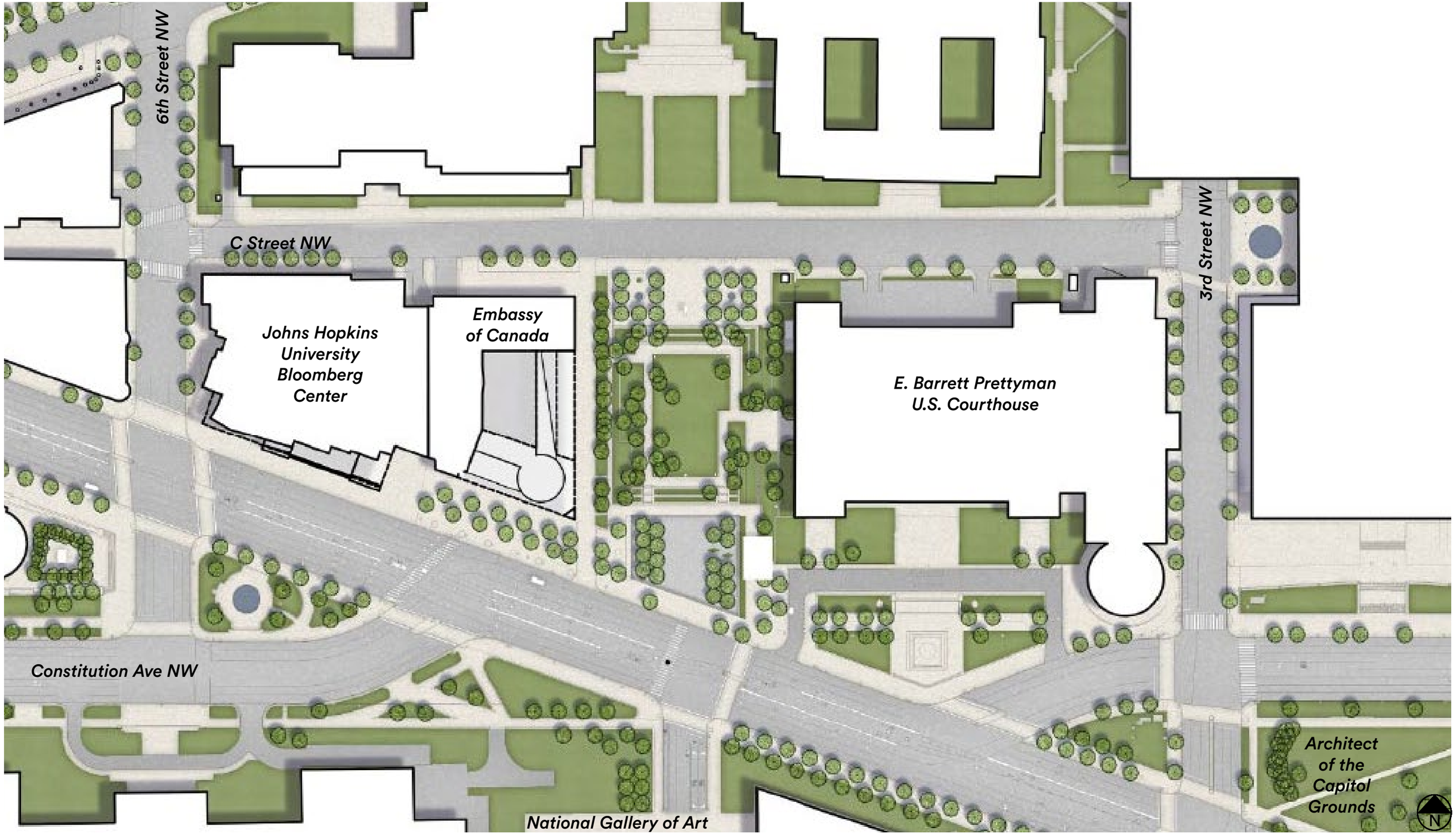


Existing Conditions: John Marshall statue podium looking south toward Pennsylvania Avenue.

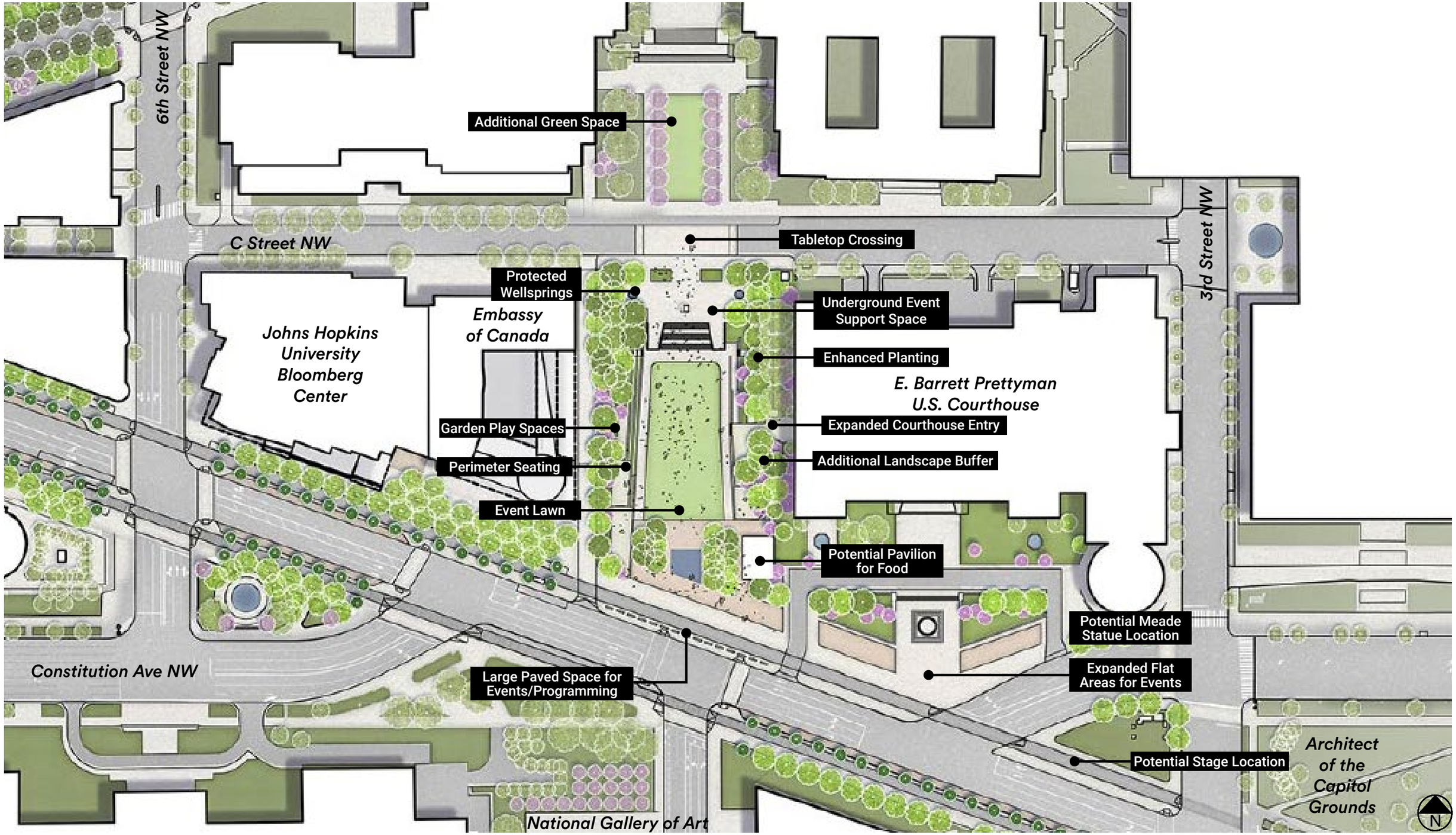


Proposed Aerial of Eastern End

Eastern End — Existing Plan



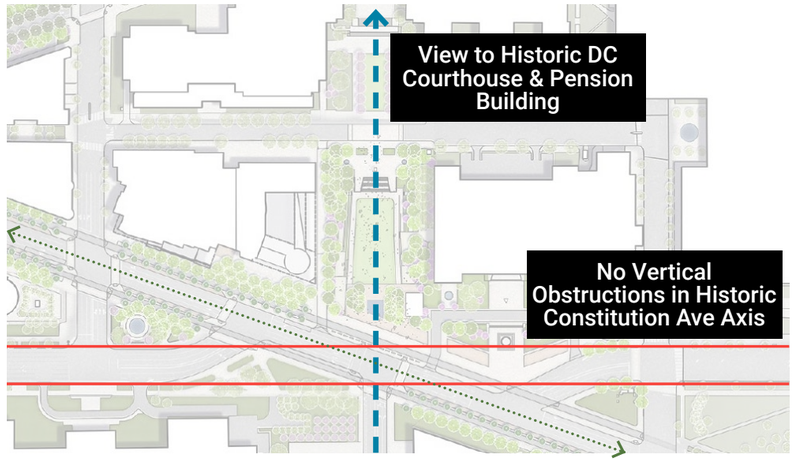
Eastern End — Proposed Site Plan

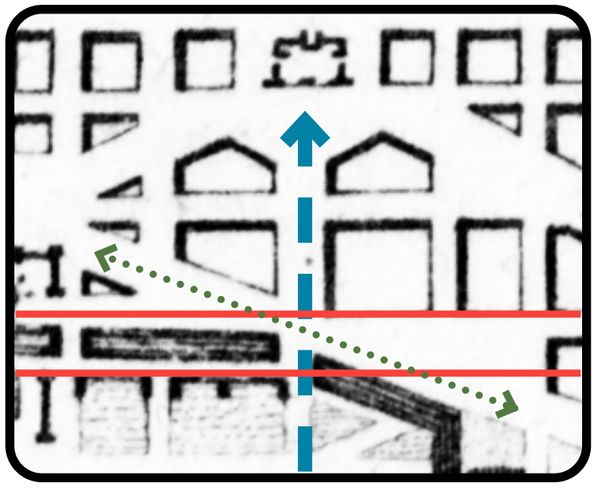


Eastern End — L'Enfant Legacy

The open vista afforded at John Marshall Park is a key component of the 4th Street viewshed looking towards Old City Hall and the National Building Museum. Along this viewshed, the topographic change moving northward creates an architectural collage of stacked building elements. As such, any intervention within the Park must consider the implications upon the overall composition.

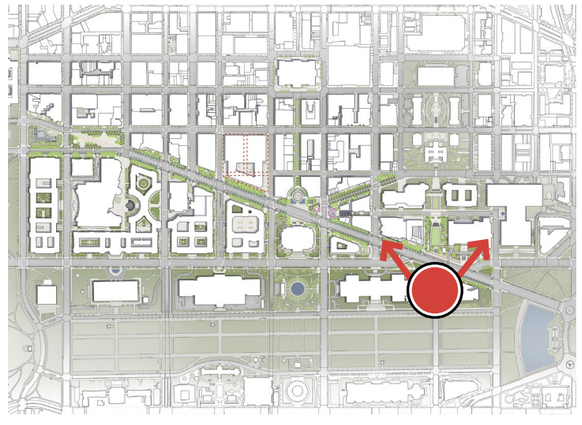
This Plan recommends a large open lawn space along the central axis of 4th Street, preserving the view towards Old City Hall while supporting the varied uses of the Park.





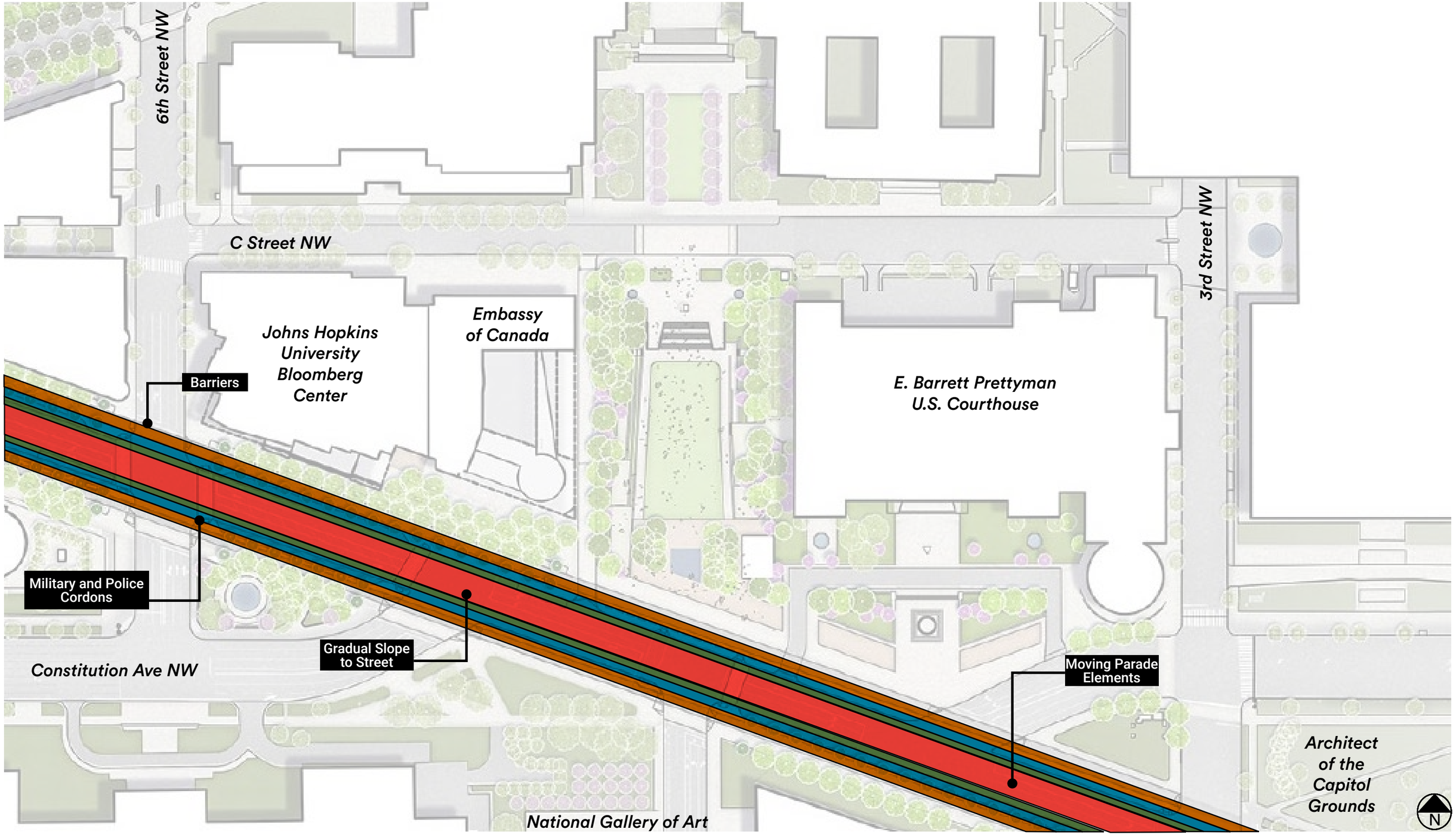


View of John Marshall Park on 4th Street Axis



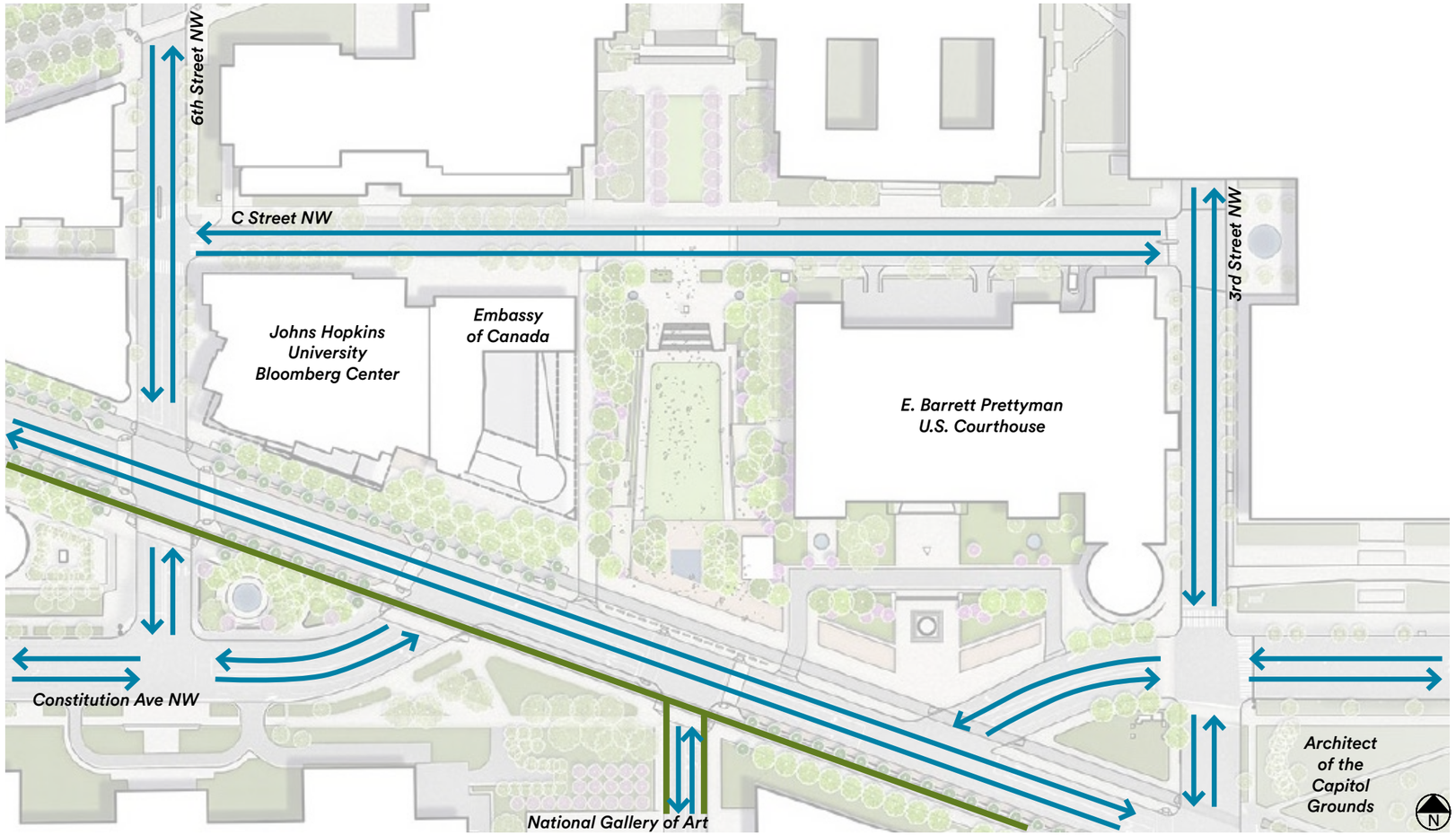
Keyplan showing viewpoints for perspective render

Eastern End — Inaugural Parade



Eastern End — Vehicle and Bike Circulation

Aside from the changes on the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor itself (described in the "Corridor – 3rd to 13th" section), vehicular and bicycle circulation remains the same in this area.



Blue – Vehicular Circulation
Green – Bicycle Circulation

Eastern End — Memorials and Monuments

A number of memorials, monuments, and cultural elements exist with the Eastern End including Mellon Fountain; the statue of John Marshall; the Chess Players; the wellsprings and their associated turtle, fish, and frog sculptures; George Gordon Meade Memorial; the statue of Sir William Blackstone; and the Trylon of Freedom. It is expected that all the above mentioned memorials, monuments, and cultural elements would remain in their current locations and be unaffected by this Plan unless noted below.

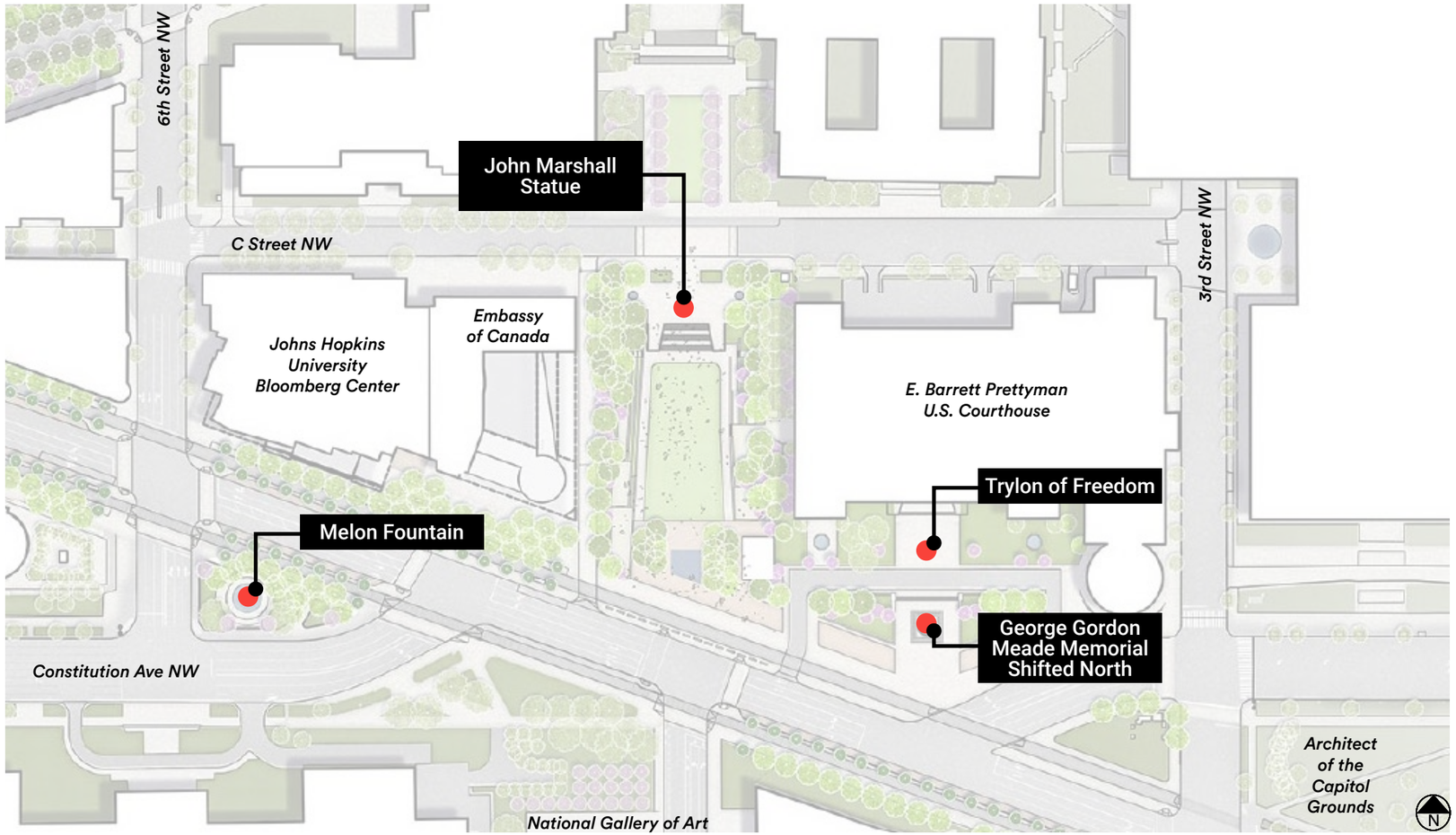
The statue of John Marshall will remain along the central 4th Street viewshed axis and will remain at the upper level of John Marshall Park. The exact placement of the statue along that axis may shift north or south depending upon further study of the hillside pavilion and the grand stair. The recently rehabilitated wellsprings and their associated turtle, fish, and frog sculptures may be considered for reuse as a part of a larger composition. Their exact position may shift depending upon further study of the hillside pavilion and the grand stair, but it is expected that they will remain at the upper level of the Park along its edges and within bosques of trees. The Chess Players are expected to be relocated within John Marshall Park to one of the stepped seating elements along the planted berms.

Within Meade Plaza, the overall geometry and organization of the space would remain the same. However, the General George G. Meade Memorial would be relocated several feet to the north of its current position, the steps up to the memorial would be removed, and the lawn panels flanking the memorial's stepped pedestal would be reduced to create a continuous paved area that aligns with the paved plaza at John Marshall Park. The carved inscription in front of the Meade Memorial would be relocated with the memorial.

The Mellon Fountain was dedicated in 1952 and designed by Otto R. Eggers. The landscape was originally designed by Clarke, Rapuano, and Holleran. To create a more accessible and welcoming space, this Plan proposes providing primary accessible routes up to the elevated fountain. The planter beds would be modified to accommodate this access and to create better circulation where Mellon Fountain intersects the corridor expression.

Two sites in the areas are noted as potential sites in the Memorials & Museums Master Plan. A future memorial could be compatible with this Plan for John Marshall Park. It would be recommended that any memorials considered for this space would not be located in the central open space that should remain completely flexible for events. Statues, commemoration, etc. could be incorporated into the garden edges among the stepped platforms and landscape. Any memorial considered should not obstruct flexibility for events of all types and scales.

In addition, the triangle parcel between Pennsylvania Avenue, Constitution Avenue, and 3rd Street is also noted as a potential site in the Memorials & Museums Master Plan. This plan recommends for that site to be removed from future consideration for potential memorials. The site has infrastructural challenges below ground and it also should remain open and flexible as this is the primary stage location for many events.



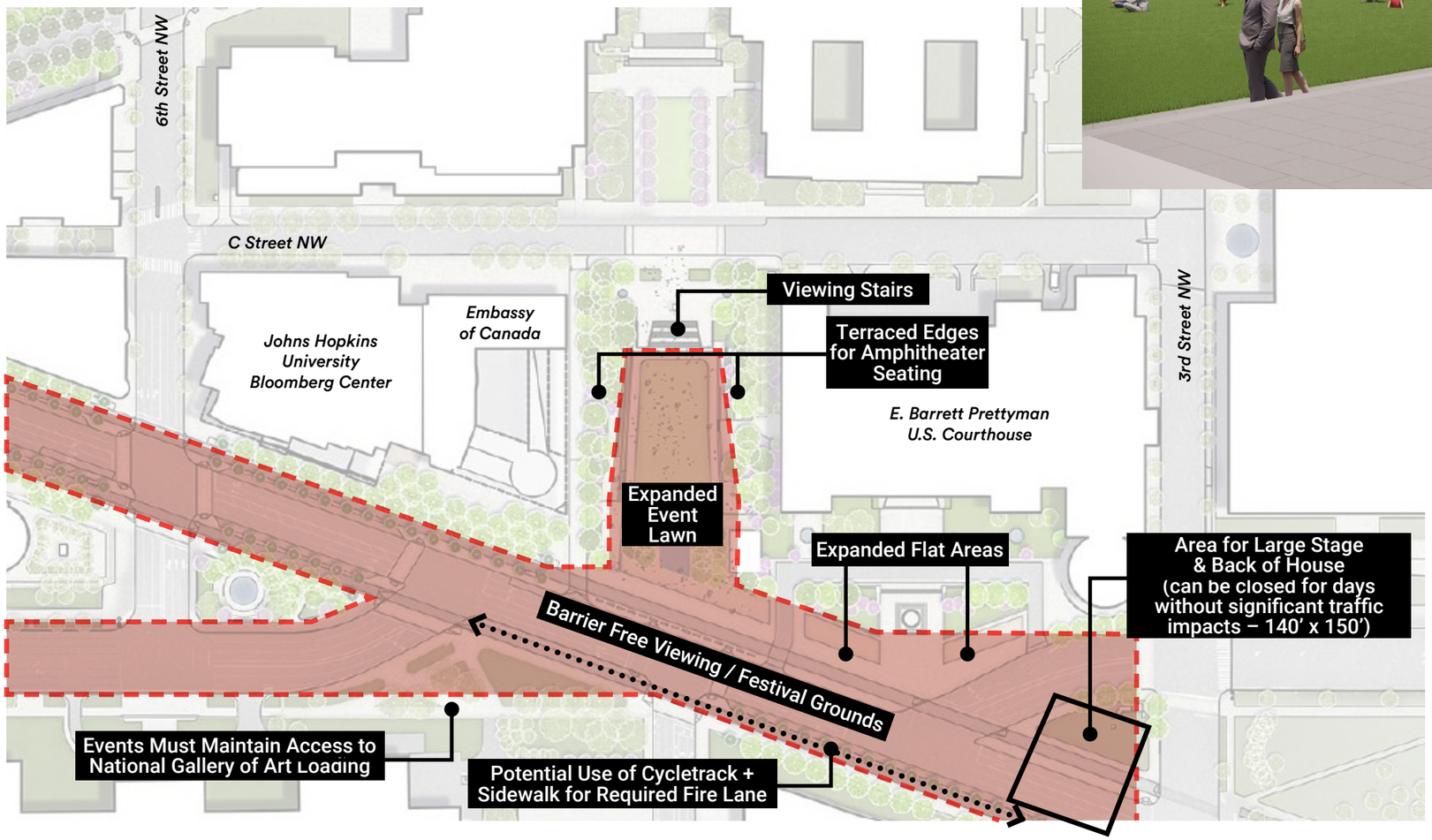
Eastern End — Events and Activation

This is the primary event space for large spectacles and festivals on the Avenue. Beyond the National Mall, DC does not have a large festival ground, and the Mall's lawn panels are being over-taxed with events that have heavy foot traffic. Therefore this expanded area at the Eastern End will fill that need (as it already does for some events today). The design focused on flexibility.

Large events can use the entire area, designated in red in the adjacent drawing, and small or medium events can use the new expanded Event Lawn that provides a large flat continuous area surrounded by terraced amphitheater like terraces, reimagining the current terraced design to maximize flexibility.

Rendering of Event Lawn from East Side Terraces





Rendering of Event Lawn



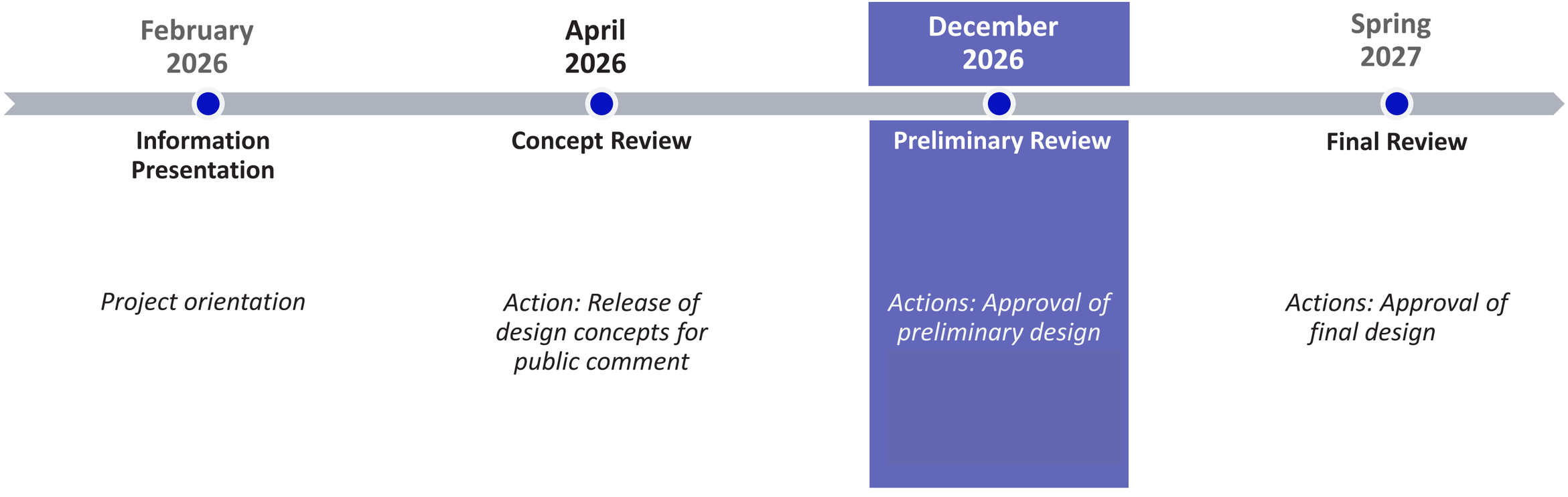
PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION

Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol

Additional Documents Available

In addition to this design submission, there are other documents available for public review in December 2026 and January 2027:

(1) Environmental Assessment (EA) – This document and its attachments is the written component of the NEPA process for this planning effort. Attached to the EA is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Assessment of Effects (AOE).



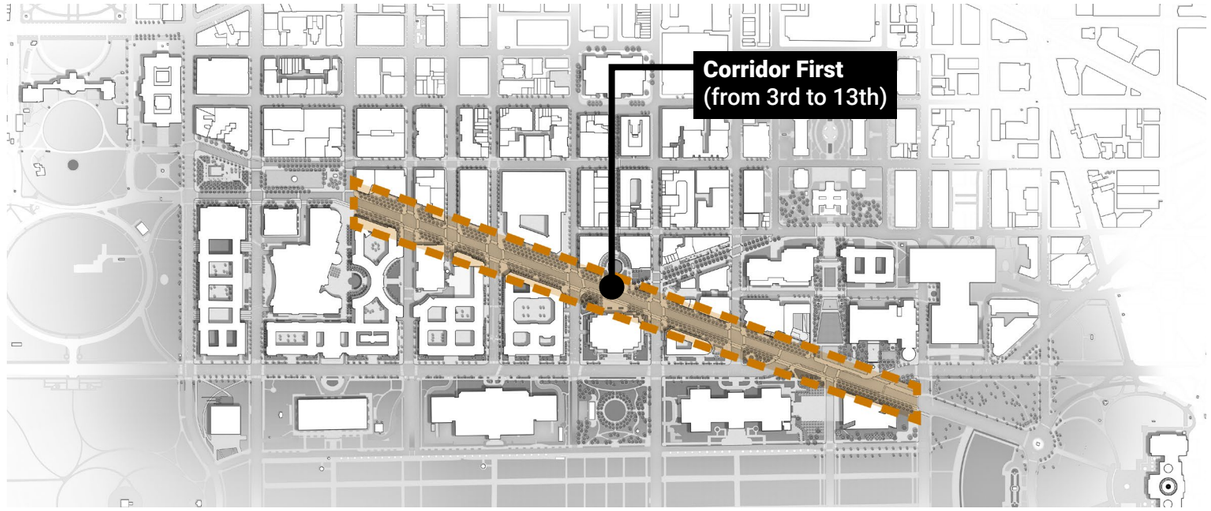
Phasing & Implementation

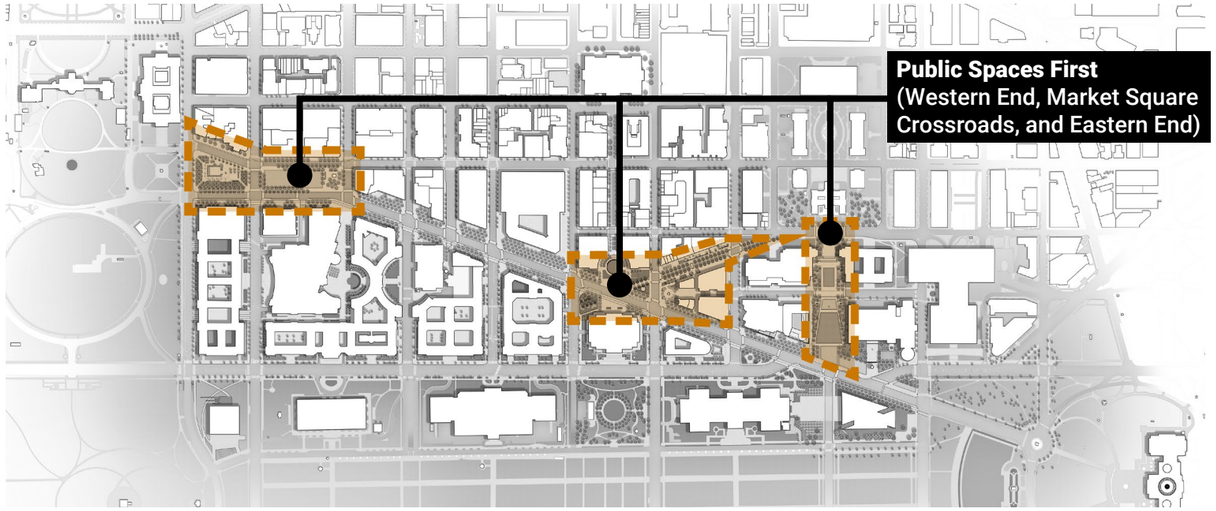
This Project is a planning effort and it is too early to determine the cost for the physical changes. Once a preferred alternative is identified, schematic drawings prepared, and a comprehensive survey completed, a reliable magnitude of cost can be estimated, which will help inform the potential funding sources. These are important details and will be further examined during future phases of design development.

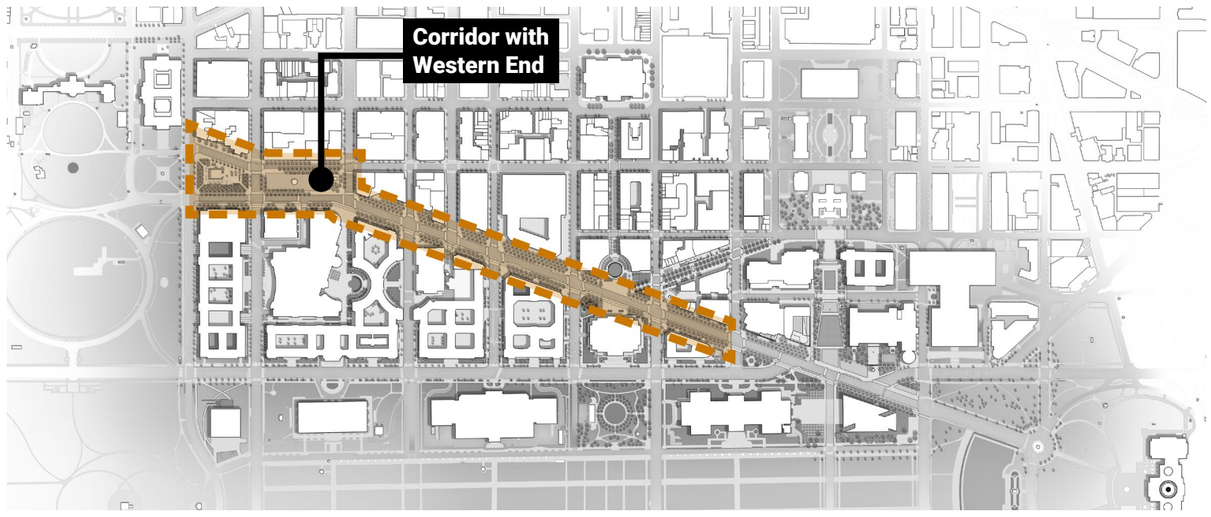
A detailed utility survey, tree assessment, and title work is underway to aid in the further phases of design development.

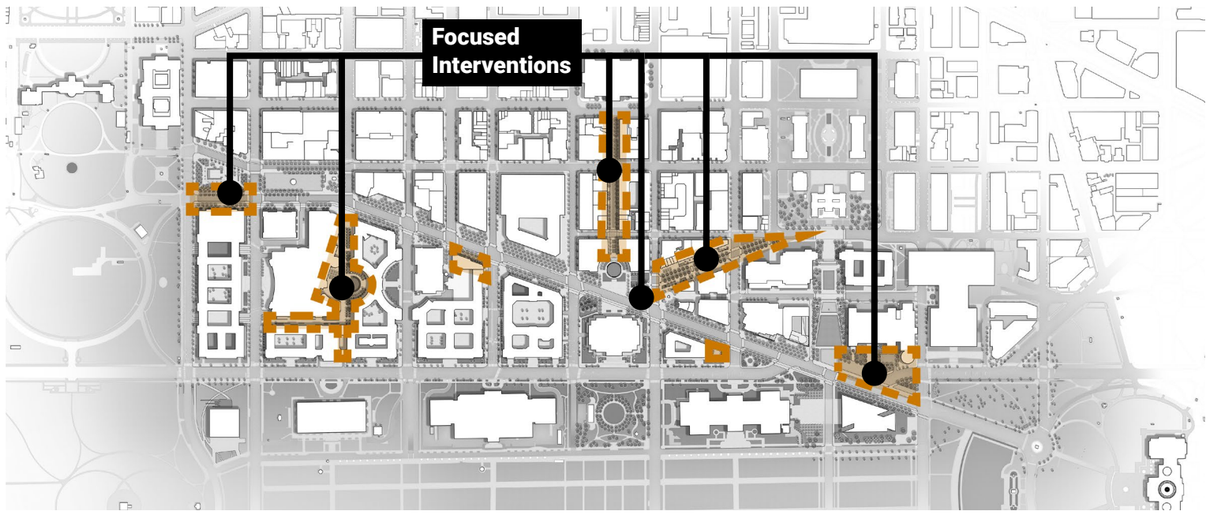
This Plan could be constructed through multiple phases. The Design Team has explored multiple options for phasing and some of the potential phasing strategies are included on the following pages. Multiple phases will be necessary to implement the Plan due to things like the inaugural parade, the large scale and complexity of the Study Area, and utility/infrastructure upgrades. Although implementation will be phased, the Avenue should be designed comprehensively . The Avenue Corridor itself should be implemented as one project and/or continuously to support utility upgrades and a cohesive and consistent frame of the Capitol viewshed.

Final design and implementation are not part of the scope of this Project. This Plan that will serve as guidelines for the Plan Area and about 30% design. As a planning commission, NCPC will not be leading the final design and implementation, and a separate yet-to-be-determined entity will lead the implementation. Concurrent to the design process another Implementation Program team is exploring all implementation options, funding strategies, and long-term operations and maintenance stewardship.









Overall Proposed Plan

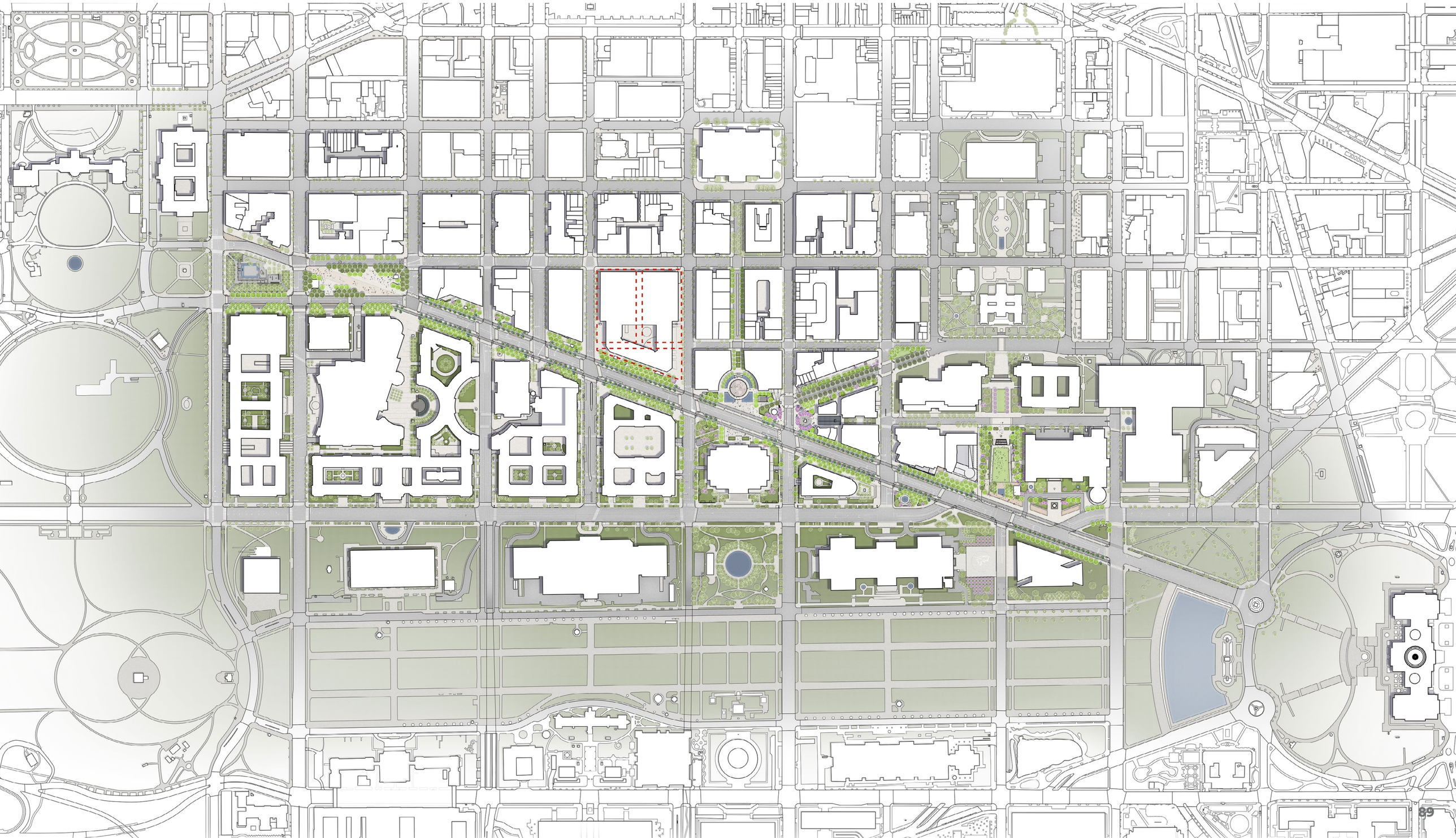


Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol