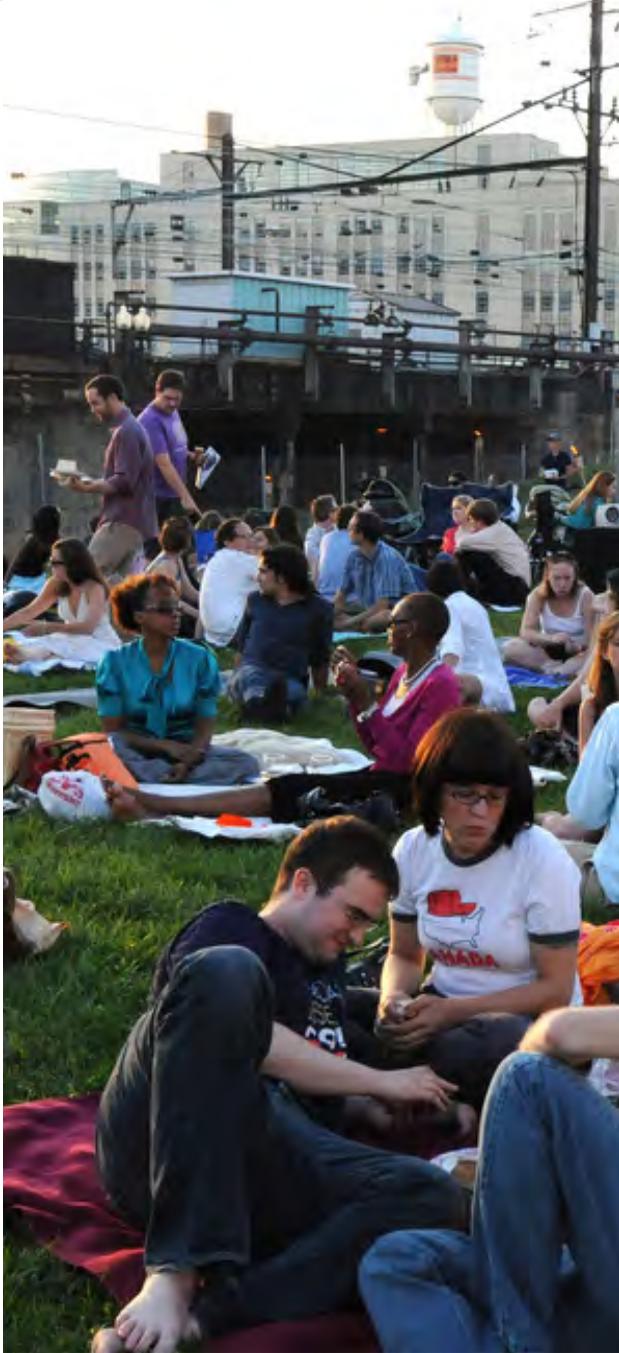




NOMA
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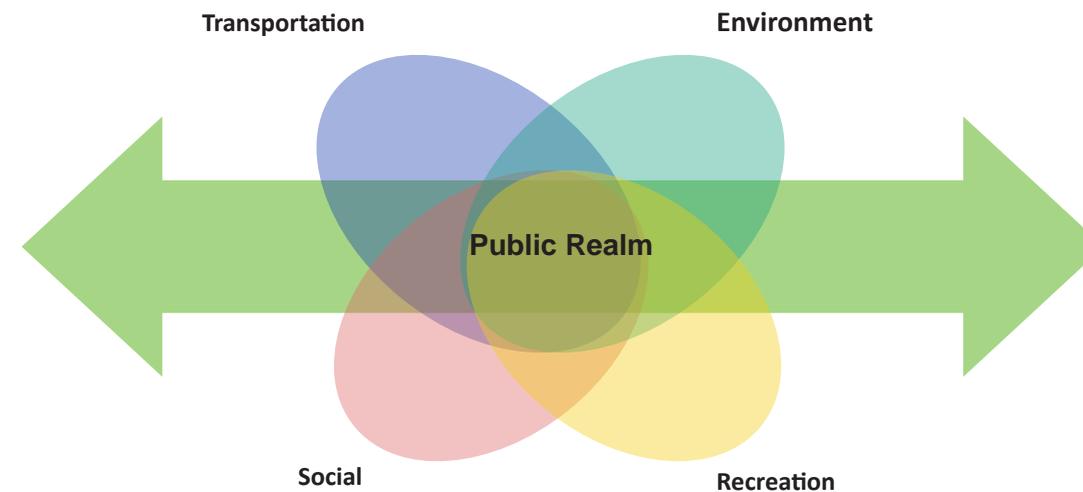
PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PLAN





NoMa is growing quickly. Fueled by transit accessibility, proximity to both Downtown and Capitol Hill and streamlined entitlements, the neighborhood has seen over \$6 billion in private investment since 2005. Approximately half of NoMa's 34 million square feet of development potential is built out to date. Office uses developed initially but over time the complexion of NoMa has become increasingly mixed-use. Of the 10,000 planned overall, 3500 residential units are either built or under construction within the boundary of the Business Improvement District (BID) as of February 2012. The growing population of residents and employees is significant but the businesses, amenities and public spaces in NoMa must serve more than those who live and work within the BID boundary.

Tens of thousands live within walking distance of the retail destinations on First Street NE. NoMa represents the most convenient shopping opportunity for some adjoining communities as well as the greatest potential for improving access to recreational amenities. Currently, there are few dedicated sites for parks within NoMa. As development continues, the public realm must provide the transportation, environmental, recreation and social amenities needed to ensure a high quality of life. The public realm is the physical and symbolic connection between people and meeting these demands requires optimized use of public property and right of way as well as creative partnerships on privately controlled land. This plan identifies an openspace framework, destinations and design opportunities that enhance private development and establish a distinctive, active, and sustainable public realm.



Input from Stakeholders

The planning process began with review of previous planning efforts and community outreach. More and more residents and workers identify their neighborhood as NoMa and their opinions and preferences should guide public realm enhancements. The BID and the planning team interviewed a number of NoMa residents, workers, property managers, developers and individuals involved in previous planning efforts. The goal of this stakeholder engagement was to understand the motivations and aspirations of each constituent group and solicit suggestions from the people who will use the public realm every day.

Overall, the people who currently live in, and will likely move to, NoMa can be considered an active, social group of young professionals who commute largely via transit, bicycle or on foot. The surrounding neighborhoods are more mixed in age and include a greater number of families.

The resident group consistently identified the need to overcome barriers like New York Avenue and North Capital Street and connect the community better in an east/west direction. The employee group was most interested in new outdoor amenities that could be enjoyed at lunch. A common theme between all groups was that one central park would not be sufficient, that a system of connected, flexible open spaces with a variety of amenities would better serve the community.

The design team asked a few specific questions to help shape recommendations. The questions and the most common answers are listed below.

What is NoMa's greatest strength?

- Transit accessibility
- Proximity to employment
- Emphasis on "green" development
- Events like summer screen and the farmer's market

What is NoMa's greatest weakness?

- Sterile or uninviting east/west streets
- Lack of park space
- Low visibility from outside the neighborhood

What is the most important element to add within the public realm?

- Comfortable places to sit
- Outdoor fitness facilities
- Lush landscaping
- Gathering space for events
- Place to throw out a blanket and picnic/read
- Places to eat lunch
- Additional facilities for bicycles
- Playgrounds
- Community dog parks
- Art installations
- Gateway elements that announce the neighborhood
- Signature "post card" moments



Public Realm Design Principles



To address the needs of NoMa stakeholders the public realm must be designed as part of a new type of city. This new city is an environment where an active lifestyle coincides with historic significance, interactive art and enhanced urban ecology. With that in mind, the concepts and recommendations within this plan area based on the following Principles:

Focus on enhancing public property first.

Integrate new public space with adjacent private development.

Design streetscapes to function as linear parks.

Provide scalable gathering spaces to support a variety of events.

Create signature spaces that become community focal points.

Establish a series of park spaces distributed throughout NoMa.

Create streetscapes that are unified in appearance but not uniform.

Optimize pedestrian and bicycle convenience and comfort.

Incorporate low impact development runoff management.

Create interactive artistic experiences.

Embrace historic elements and incorporate the railroad influence.

Accomodate needs of families with children.

Opportunities

The planning process considered multiple factors when evaluating opportunity sites for signature spaces and streetscape enhancements including the locations of:

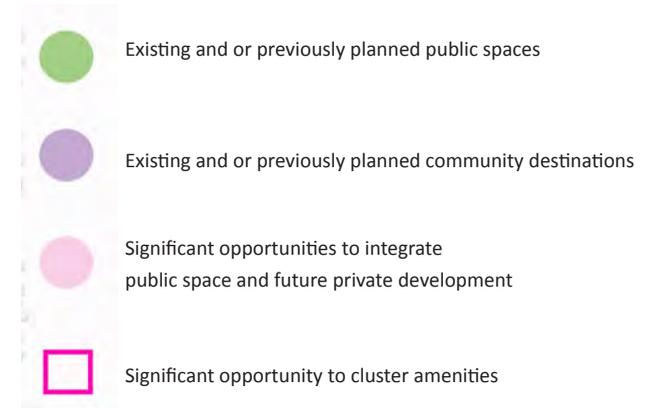
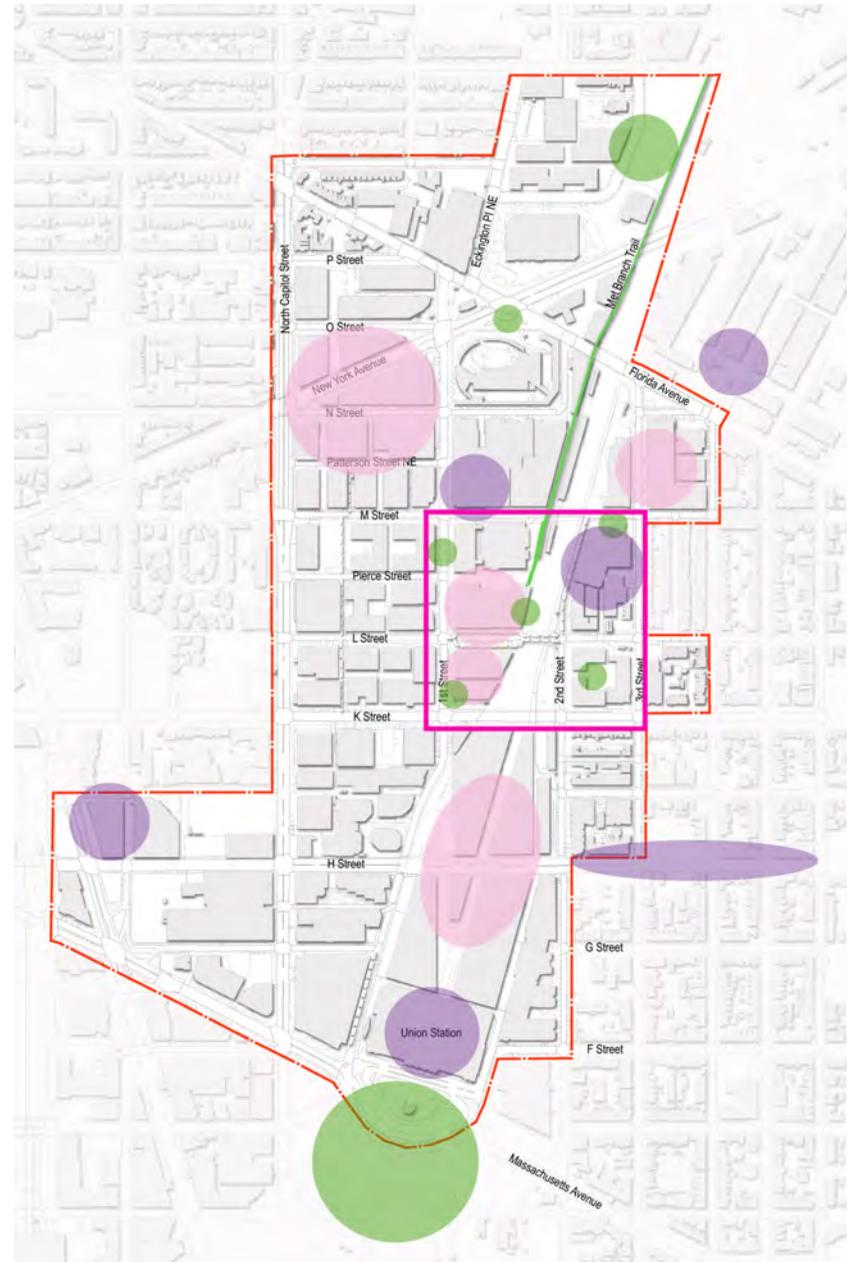
Existing open spaces such as the Metropolitan Branch Trail and Columbus Circle.

Previously planned public spaces such as the plaza north of the Uline arena, the park proposed in phase II of the Loree Grand, Burnham Park at First and K Streets NE, High Point Park south of the NoMA Metro station, Pepco Park and First Street Park.

Existing community destinations such as Union Station, Galludet University, H Street and the Harris Teeter Grocery store.

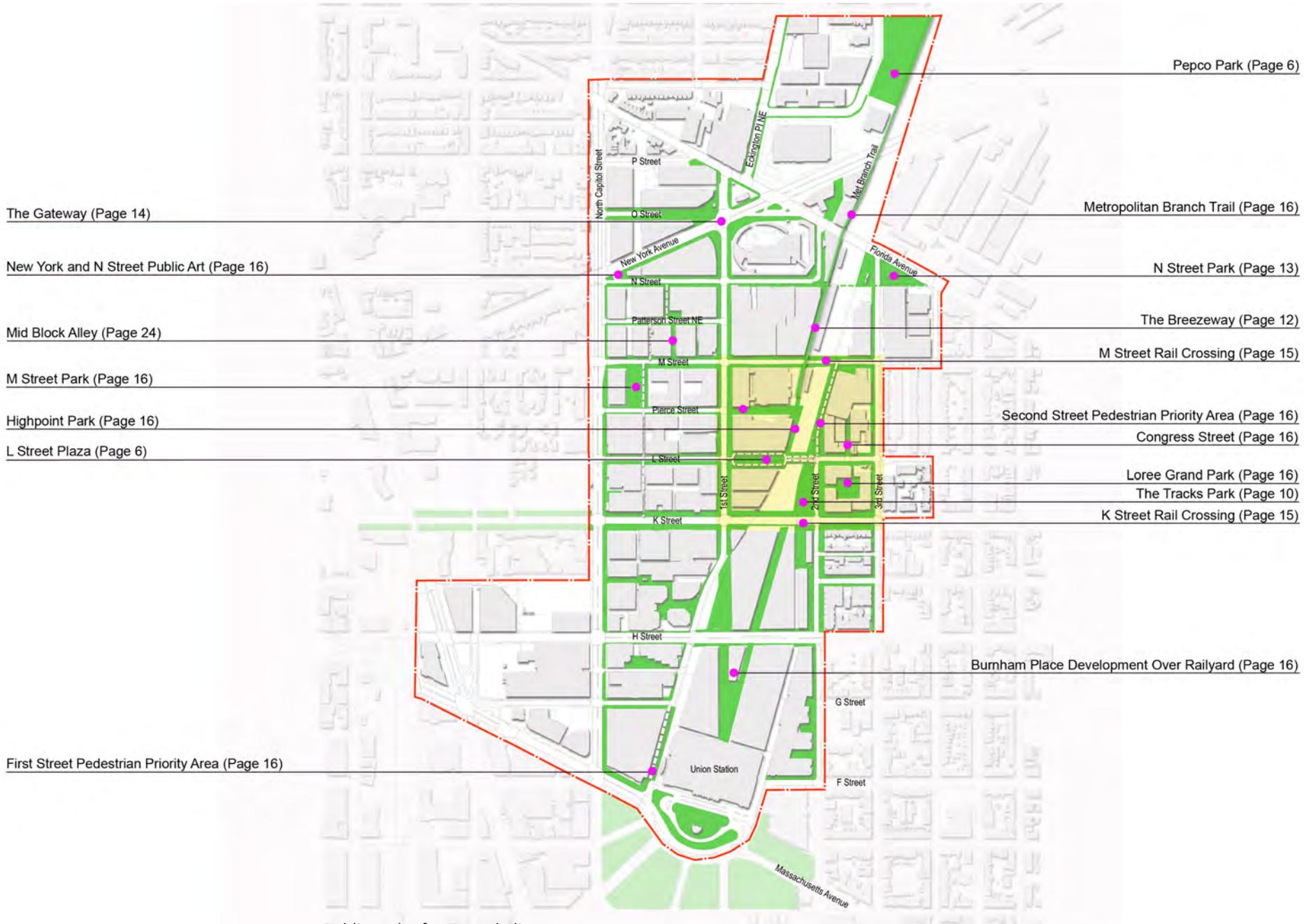
Previously proposed destinations such as the to-be-renovated Uline Arena, the Florida Avenue Market redevelopment, the Walmart site.

Development sites were identified that held significant potential integrate public space during their eventual redevelopment. The area bounded by First Street, M Street, Third Street and K Street emerged as a center of gravity for proposed amenities that can add value to private development, connect the community and establish a distinctive sense of place.



Public space considerations diagram

Public Realm Framework



Public realm framework diagram

The proposed public realm framework establishes connections between parks on public land, within the public right of way and on adjacent private land with limited development potential. The public realm system incorporates existing destinations, previously planned parks and proposed public space enhancements.

The framework diagram illustrates the public realm network and locations of signature spaces. More information about each location can be found on the pages listed.

The following pages highlight the signature spaces within the framework.

L Street Plaza

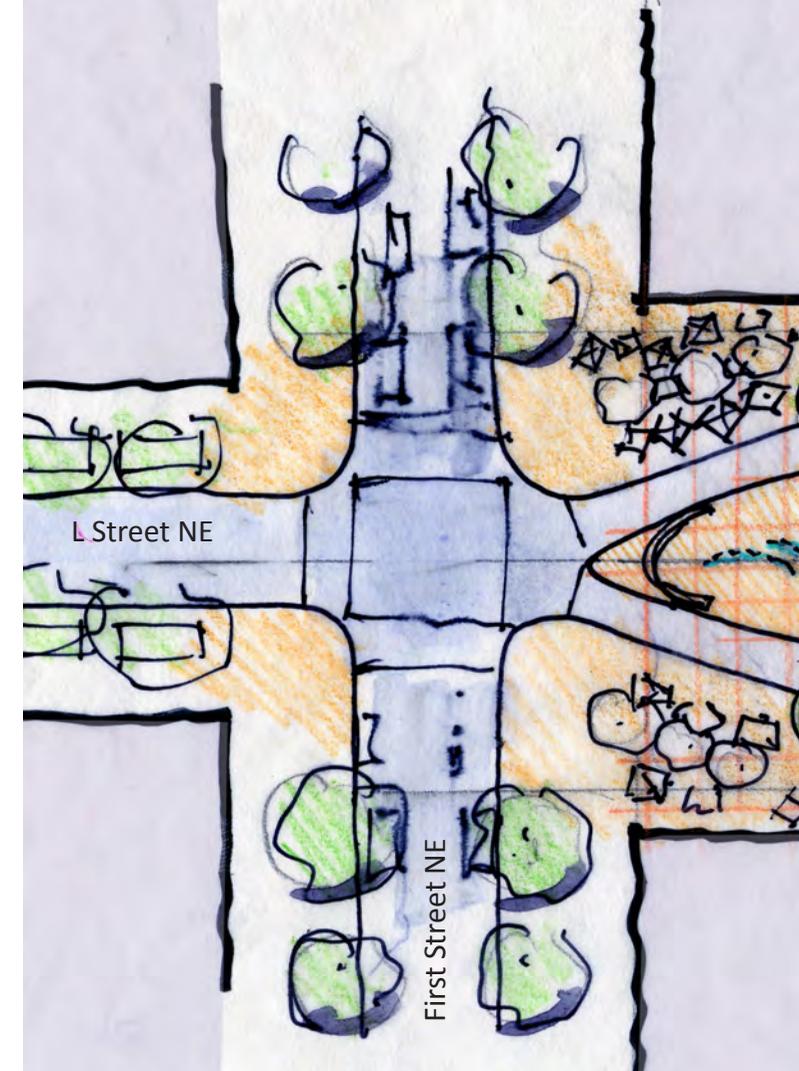
This signature space utilizes the L Street right of way and small strips of adjacent private land to create a flexible gathering area for festivals, exhibits and outdoor dining. Part plaza, part park, L Street is scalable to stage events of all sizes. The central space is broad enough to incorporate interactive fountains, shaded seating and a pavilion venue for the farmer's market, summer screen, art exhibits and other community events. L Street Plaza creates a new east/west linkage as well as an opportunity to connect to the Metropolitan Branch Trail adjacent to the railroad tracks. This connection can be made via bicycle lanes along the street or a cycle track through the central space.



Existing conditions

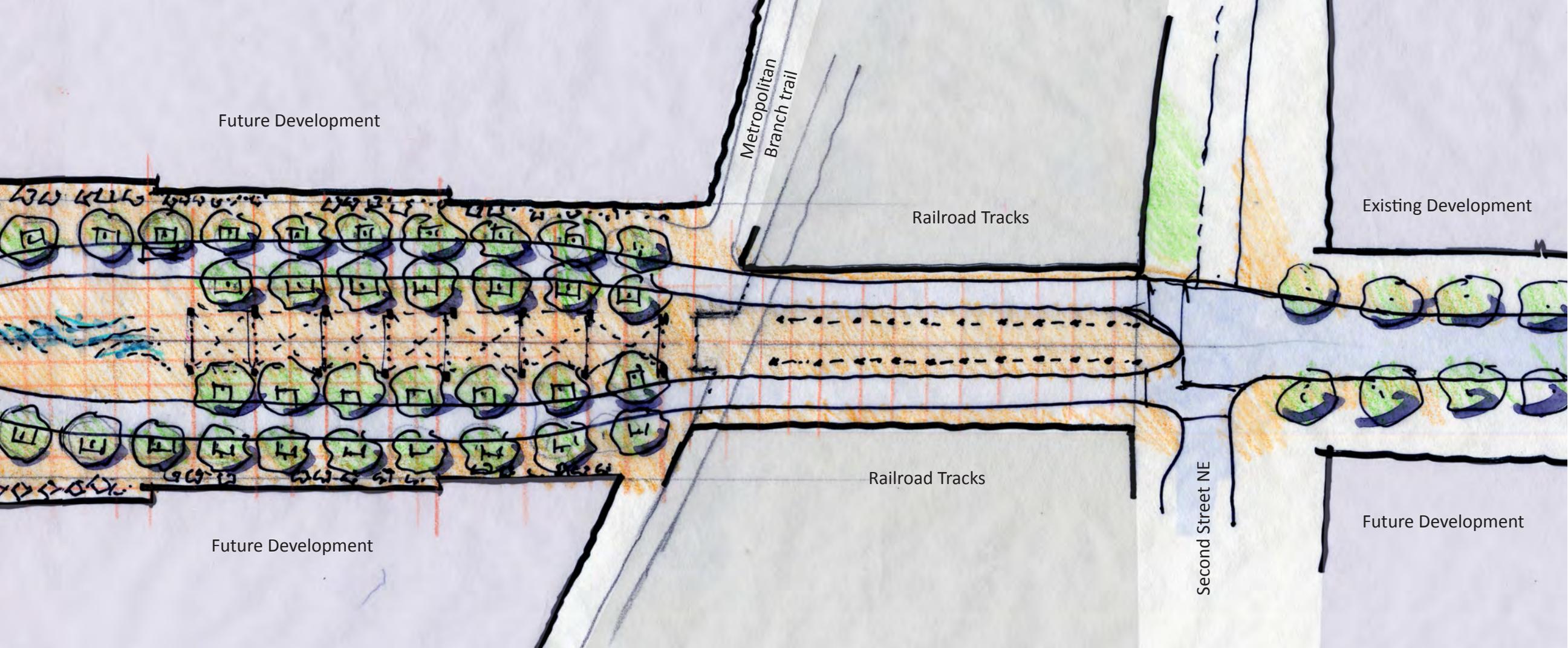


Location



NORTH

Concept Sketch Plan



L Street Plaza



L Street Plaza is envisioned with narrow, calm, curbsless travel lanes for vehicles. The street can be closed to traffic to support larger events.

View from First Street NE looking east



The L Street railroad bridge can be enhanced with additional pedestrian space and projected art and light effects. Bridges throughout NoMa can employ a similar treatment.

The Tracks Park

The Tracks Park offers a unique setting for active and passive recreation adjacent to the railroad. Currently a privately owned parking lot with constrained development potential, The Tracks Park site sits at the train level and is surrounded by the Burnham wall, the traction station and the catenary structures of the railroad. By reconfiguring the parking, the 1.7 acre site can provide for neighborhood recreation and fitness as well as a significant dog park and overlooks for observing the trains.

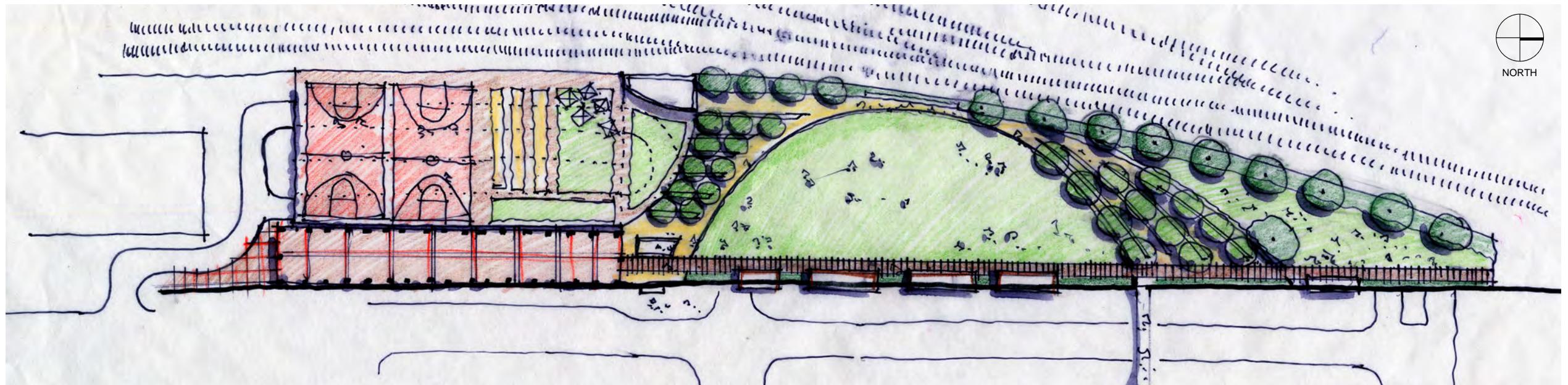
The site is level with the Second Street and I Street Intersection and can be accessed vertically from L Street. A pedestrian bridge across Second Street can also connect to the park within the Loree Grand development. The existing parking could either be reconfigured as an above grade structure or built below the park. The Tracks Park can also include connections to the Burnham Place Development



Location



Existing conditions



Concept Sketch Plan



View of the great lawn looking north

The Breezeway

The Breezeway is an under-utilized asset that can incorporate art, play elements, vending kiosks and or seating opportunities in addition to bicycle storage. The Breezeway's shade and weather protection make it a unique community feature.



Existing condition



Location



View of the breezeway looking north



Existing condition

The N Street corridor between 3rd Street and Florida Avenue provides limited parking and circulation. If combined with the modest triangular private parcel to the north, a public space can be created that serves the adjoining neighborhood, improves pedestrian conditions along Florida Avenue and integrates with development south of N Street.



View from the N Street and Florida Avenue intersection looking west



Location

The Gateway

The intersection of First Street and New York Avenue acts as a gateway both to NoMA and greater Downtown area. This dual gateway can be made legible by incorporating two sets of sculptural elements; one located on the ATF site and the other installed in the O Street corridor west of First Street.



Existing condition



Location



View along New York Avenue looking west

Railroad Bridge Enhancements



Example of artistic enhancements to railroad bridges

The railroad bridges at Florida Avenue, M Street, and K Street are a characteristic features of NoMA. They are vital east/west community connections as well that can be enhanced by incorporating light and art. These enhancements could support public safety and establish a distinct atmosphere that simultaneously acknowledges NoMA's history and future.



Location

Additional Public Realm Opportunities

Additional public space opportunities exist within NoMa. These destinations and connections are also integral components of the public space system that serve the community:

Pepco Park - The undeveloped Pepco site east of Harry Thomas Way has the scale and proximity to be an active recreation resource.

Metropolitan Branch Trail- The existing trail supports commuting and recreation and would ideally continue as an elevated trail to Union Station with an additional community connection at L Street.

New York and N Street Public Art- This highly visible intersection is a prime location for public art and simplified vehicular circulation.

M Street Park- relocation of the District of Columbia offices on this parcel can open its potential to serve neighborhood recreation needs west of First Street.

Highpoint Park- Identified during previous planning efforts, Highpoint Park can be a linear venue for art inspired by the movement of the railroad.

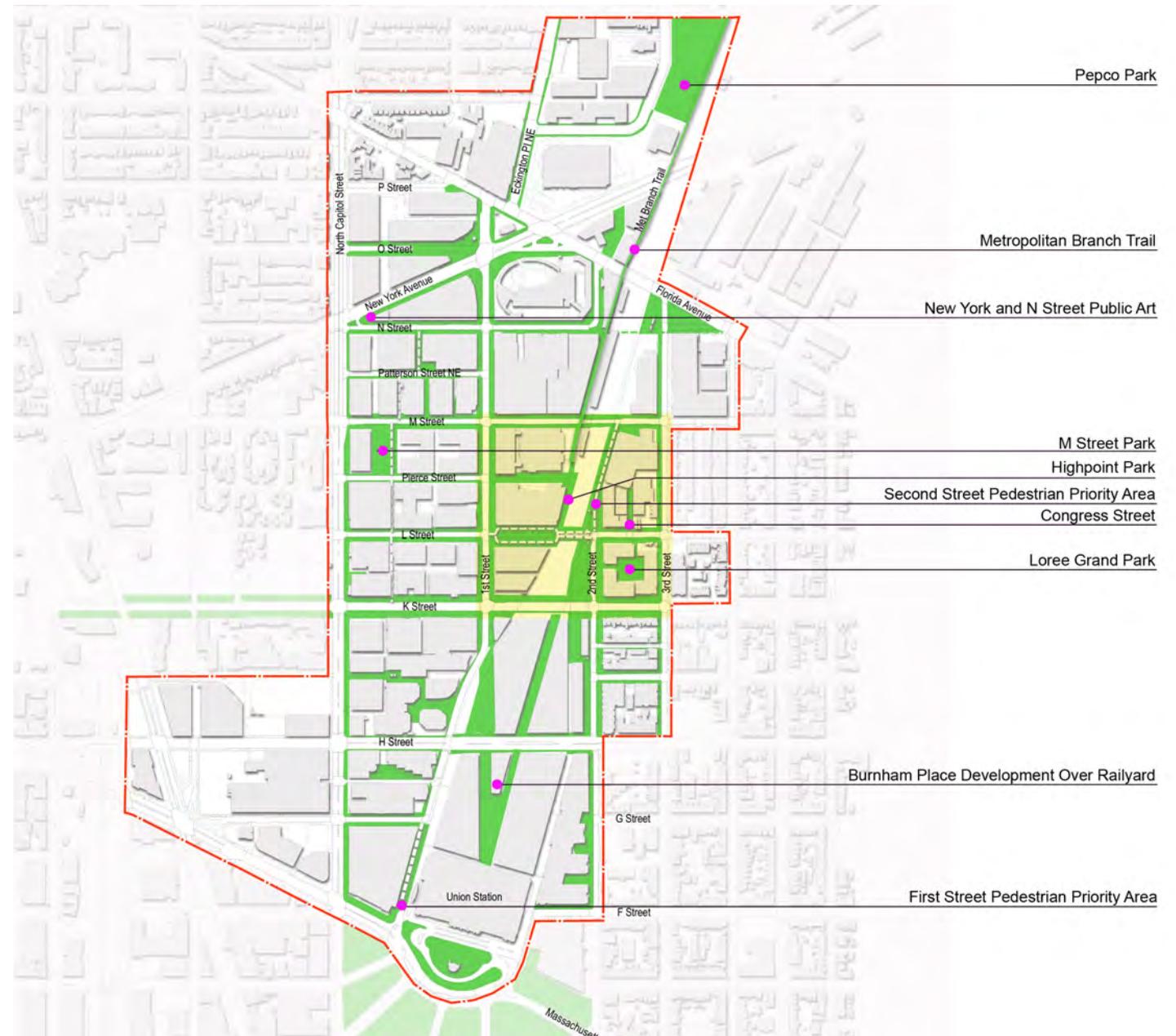
Congress Street- Congress Street can be enhanced as a plaza space supporting adjacent retail and office development.

Loree Grand Park- The park space planned within the Loree Grand development will offer public amenities to the eastern edge of the neighborhood.

Second Street Pedestrian Priority Area- Limiting vehicular access along Second Street, adjacent to the Uline Arena, would allow for event staging, and a wider bicycle corridor.

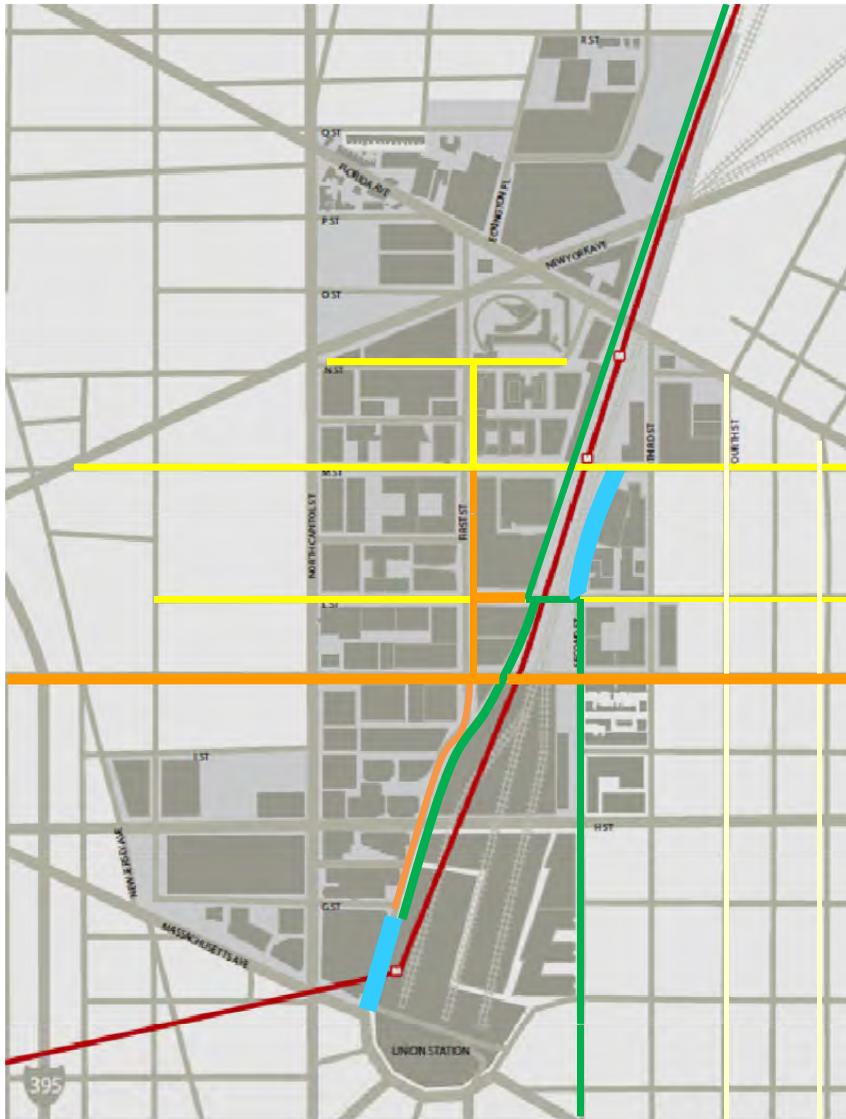
Burnham Place- Future development above the rail yard will incorporate public space amenities and multiple connection points to the surrounding NoMa neighborhood.

First Street Pedestrian Priority Area- Originally recommended in the 2010 neighborhood access study, the segment of First Street between Massachusetts Avenue and G Street can better accommodate pedestrian access to the Union Station Metro Station and shuttle service drop-off and loading if vehicular access is limited.



Walkability and Bicycle Infrastructure

Bicycle connectivity is an important amenity for the current and future residents and commuters to NoMa. Improving facilities for bicycle circulation will reduce local vehicle trips and associated congestion. Similarly, ensuring two-way vehicular traffic on all NoMa streets will calm traffic and support enhanced walkability.



- Bicycle Lanes
- Cycle Track or Bicycle Lanes
- Metropolitan Branch Trail
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Priority Street

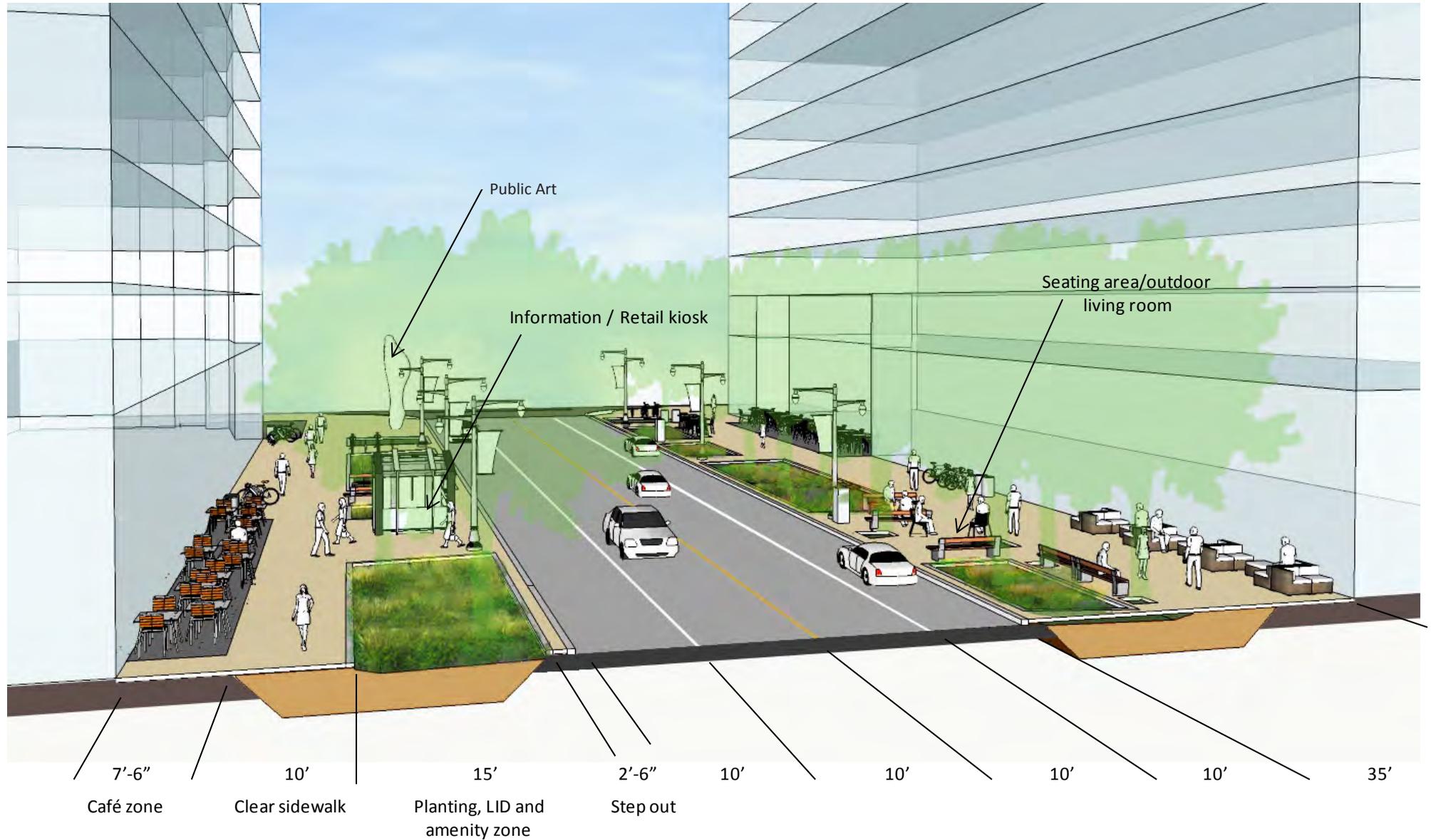
Recommended Bicycle Infrastructure

First Street NE Design Concept

First Street from K Street to Florida Avenue is intended to function as a linear park with a variety of seating opportunities, gardens, integrated artwork and commercial amenities at frequent intervals. The sidewalk space is configured to aggregate amenity space where it is most usable, to provide clear sidewalk where pedestrians naturally want to be and to allow cafe space for ground floor commercial uses.



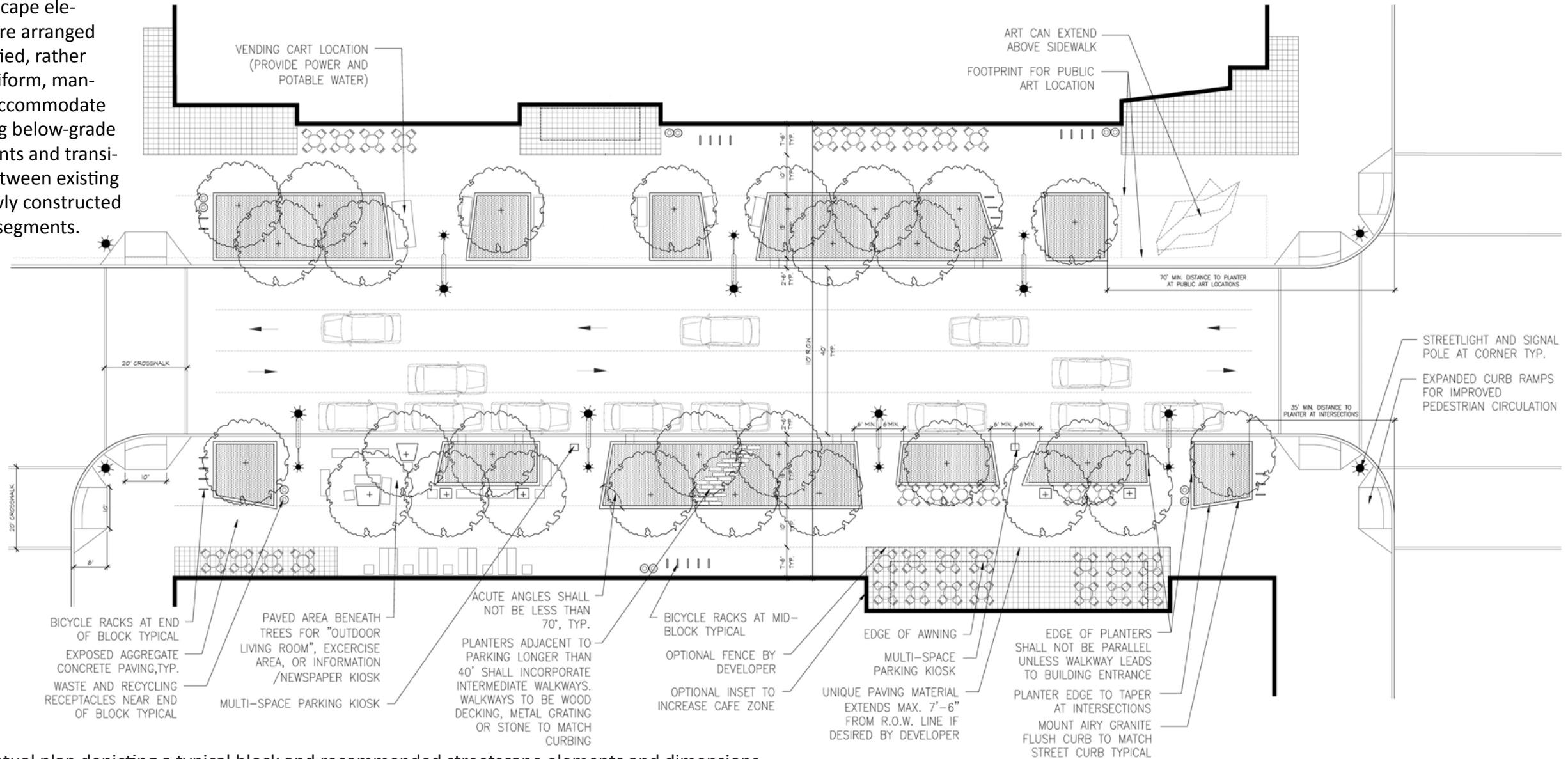
Location



Conceptual rendering of recommended streetscape elements and proportions

First Street NE Design Concept - Typical Block

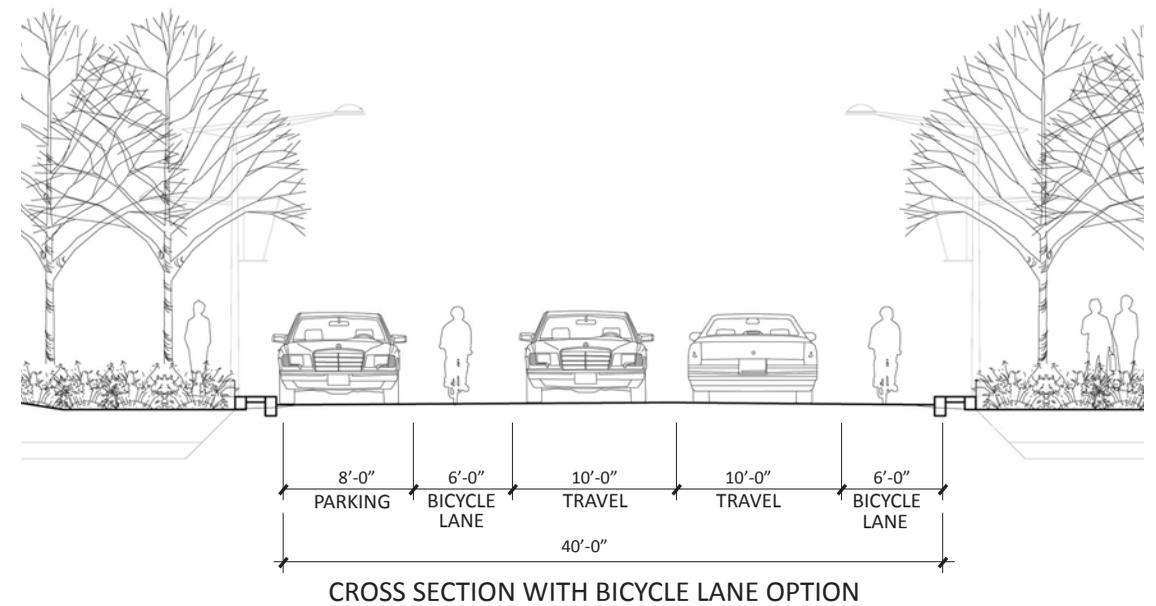
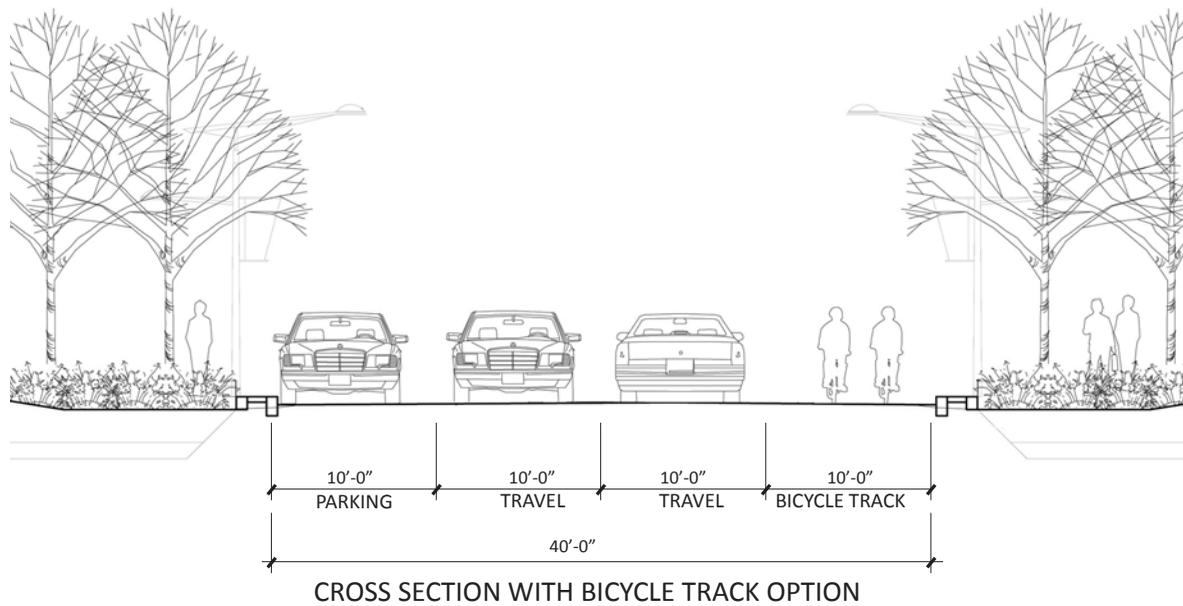
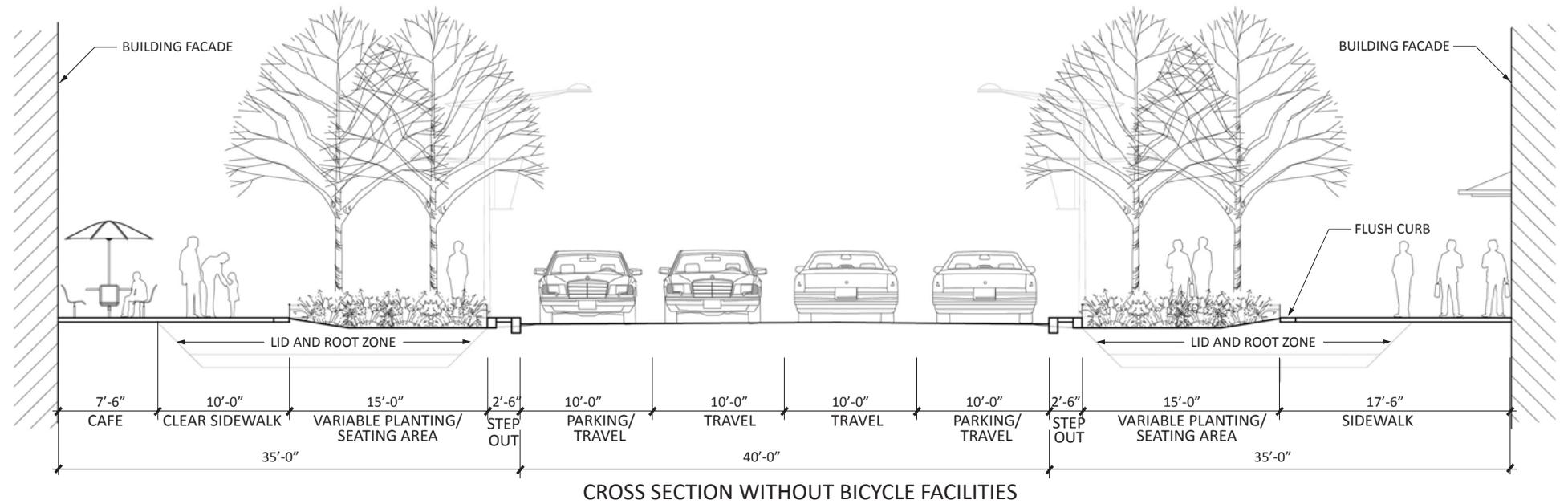
Streetscape elements are arranged in a unified, rather than uniform, manner to accommodate changing below-grade constraints and transitions between existing and newly constructed street segments.



Conceptual plan depicting a typical block and recommended streetscape elements and dimensions

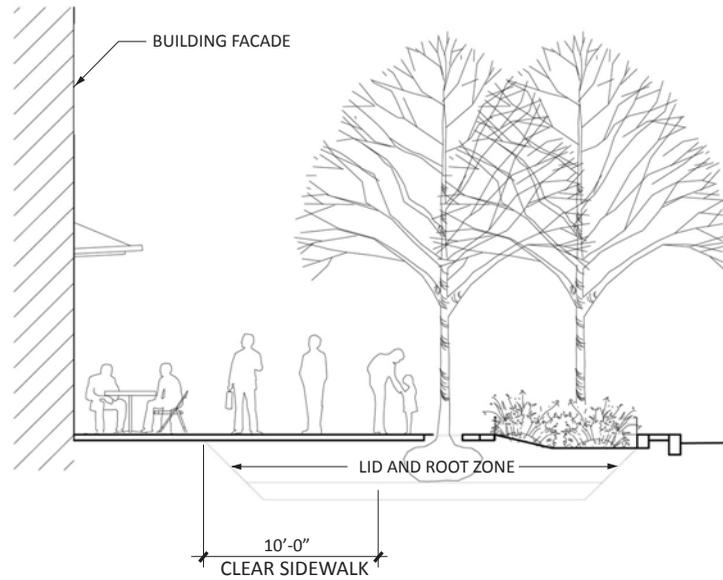
First Street NE Design Concept - Typical Section

The design concept allows flexibility between the curbs to configure the roadway for on street parking and bicycle lanes or a combination of on-street parking and two-way cycle track. The amenity space behind the curb can be designed to incorporate low impact development storm water management techniques and adequate uncompacted root space for street trees. Whenever feasible, a double row of staggered street trees should be provided.

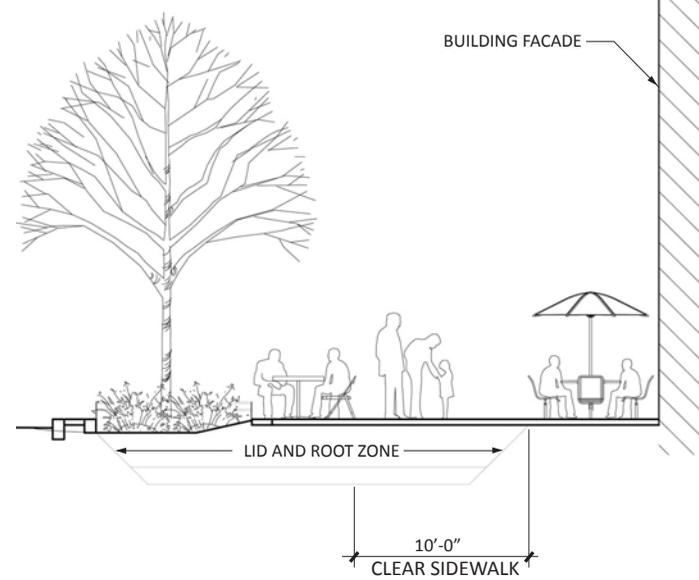


First Street NE Design Concept - Section Variations

EXPANDED SIDEWALK

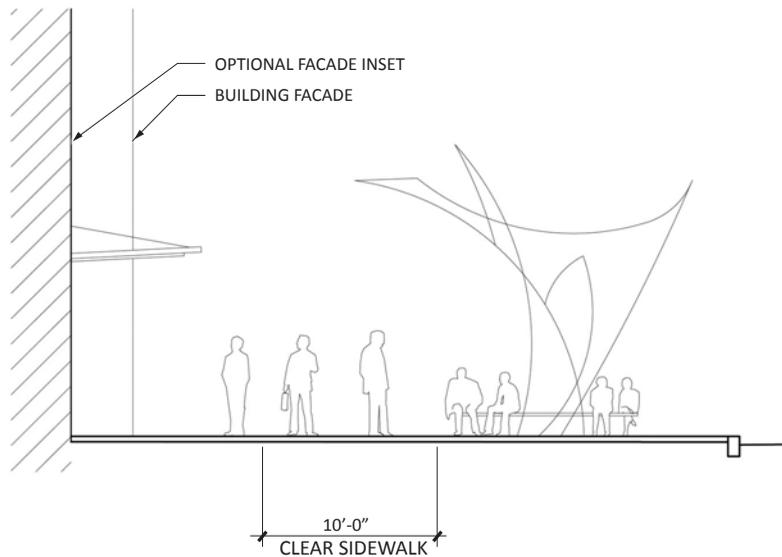


CAFE ZONE

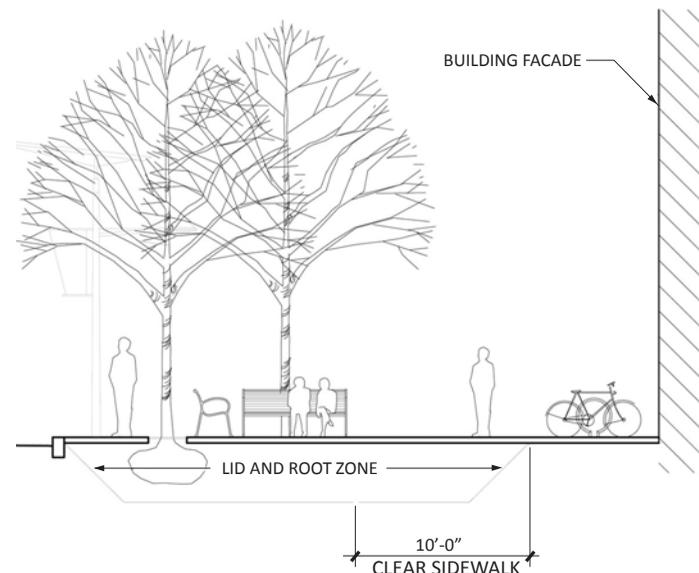


The design concept encourages variation along the streetscape. The amenity zone can be configured in multiple ways to accommodate additional sidewalk space or cafe zone, public art installations and seating areas that function as outdoor living rooms. The illustrations on this page convey potential configurations.

ART INSTALLATION



OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM BENEATH TREES

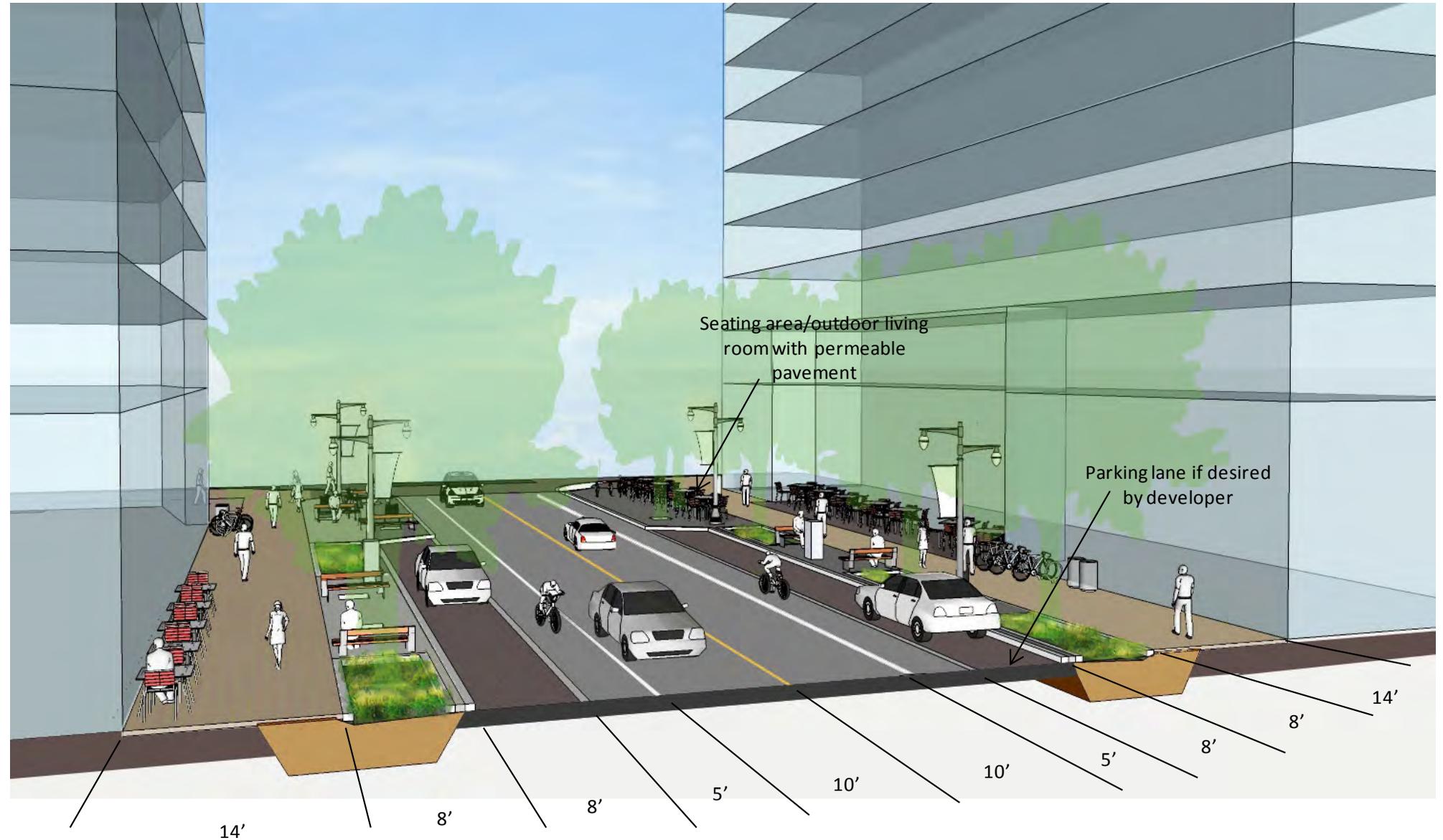


90' r.o.w. Design Concept (N, M, and L Streets)

The design concept for east/west streets is a variation on the First Street concept including the curbside amenity zone and broad sidewalk adjacent to the buildings with integrated cafe space. Streetscape materials shall be similar to First Street. The existing curb line can be altered to provide on-street parking on either side of the street. The parking lane shall incorporate permeable pavements to capture run-off and improve water quality.



Location



Conceptual rendering of recommended streetscape elements and proportions

50' r.o.w. Design Concept (Pierce and Patterson Streets)



Conceptual rendering of recommended streetscape elements and proportions

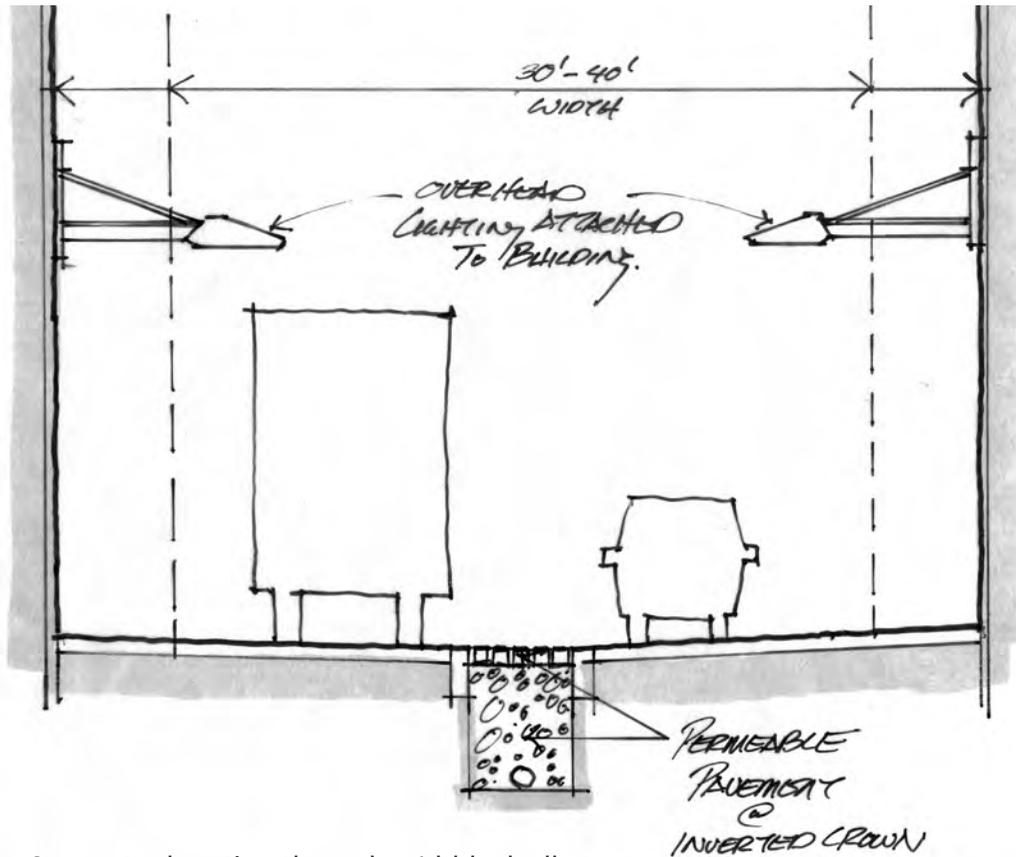
Narrow streets like Pierce and Patterson shall take on their own variation of the same concept including permeable on street parking along one side of the street, travel lanes shared by bicycles and vehicles and a characteristic lighting approach to provide interest and a safe atmosphere in the evening. These streets can provide locations for shallow-depth neighborhood commercial amenities and enhanced east/west connectivity.



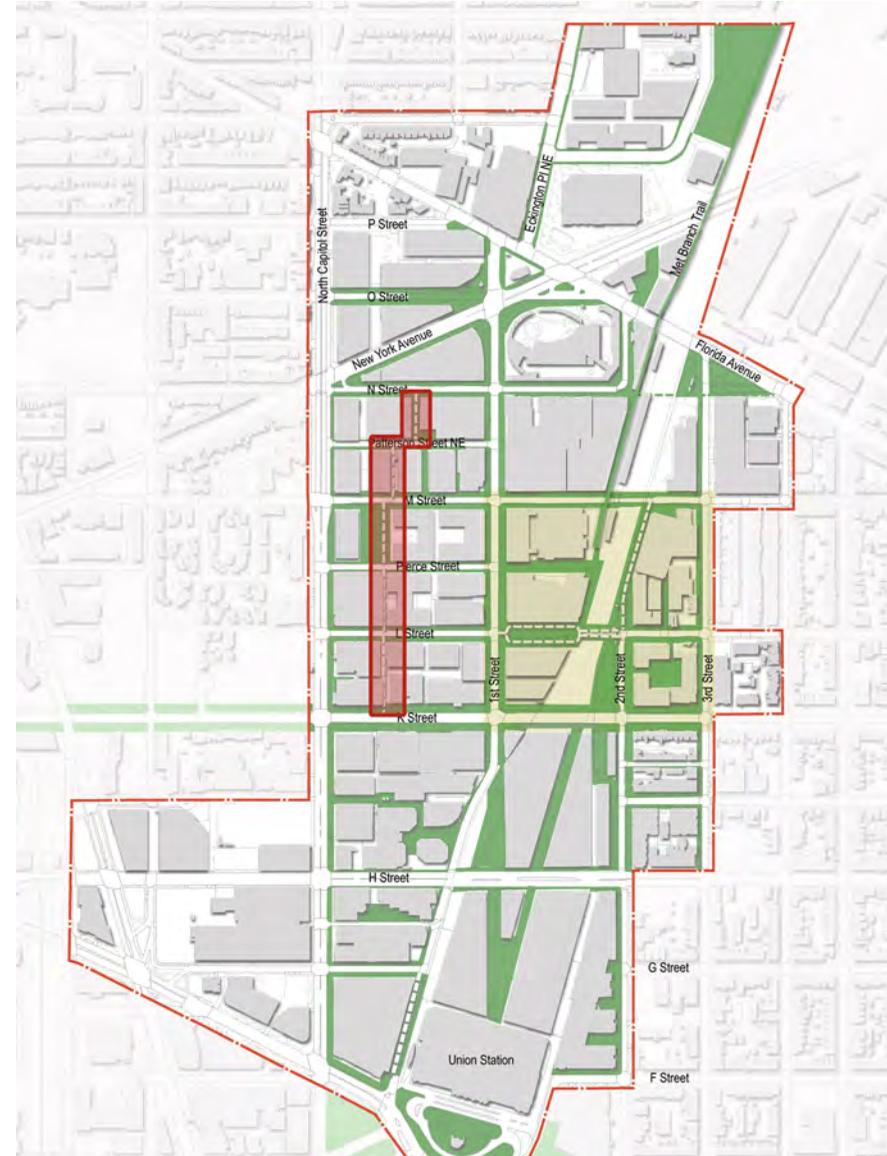
Location

Mid-block Alley System

A mid-block alley system, running parallel to North Capitol Street, can reduce congestion on First Street, improve circulation choices within NoMa and provide service access to adjoining development. Moving service and garage access from the east/west streets to an alley allows for more leasable street frontage.



Conceptual section through mid-block alley



Conceptual location of the mid-block alley

Animating Existing Spaces



Example of green wall used to animate a pedestrian pathway.



Illustration of architectural elements used to create an inviting human scale



Existing condition

There are a number of unwelcoming streetscapes in NoMa that can be enhanced to better support the neighborhood. In many cases, building facades do not create an inviting sense of scale or sufficiently animate the public realm. These undefined spaces can be improved by adding architectural elements that orient pedestrians, provide weather protection and establish a human scale environment. Vertical gardens can also be added to improve visual appeal, augment air quality and support urban agriculture.

Site Furnishings

Site furnishings shall utilize responsibly harvested wood or recycled materials and stainless steel or visually similar, powder coated steel components. Benches and chairs shall include arms. A consistent tree fence should be utilized at the edges of all planters to unify the streetscape.



Robert tree fence by Landscape forms

Neoliviano Bench and Parc Center Table by Landscape forms

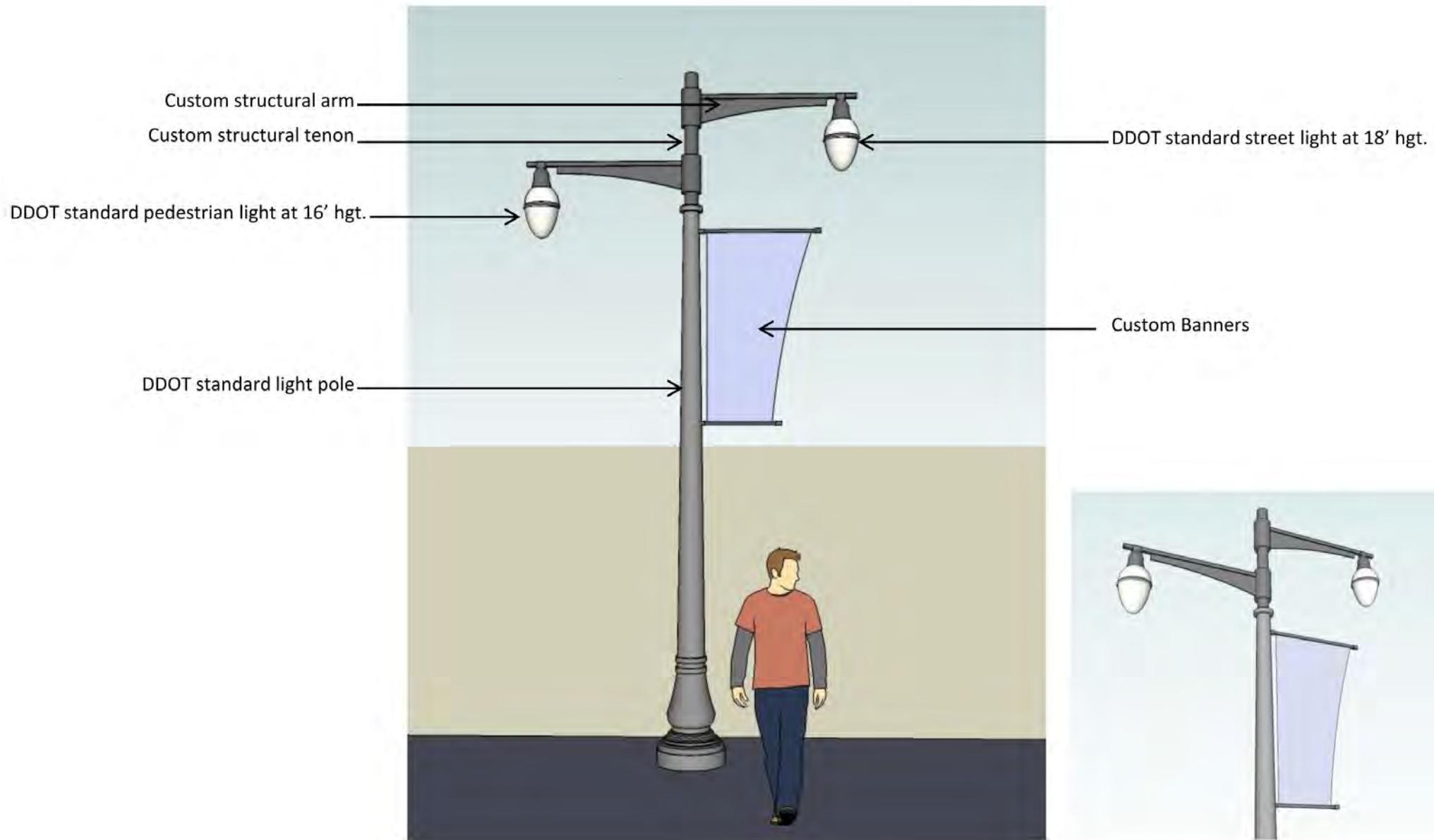


Illustration of street lighting concept

Street lighting offers a significant opportunity to differentiate the community. Standard lights and poles can be used in combination with custom elements to create a lighting system unique to NoMa. These tailored features can be incorporated at signature locations and incorporate electrical connections for staging events. The concept shown on this page incorporates street and pedestrian oriented lighting in a manner that reflects the form of near-by railroad structures.

Vending and Information Kiosks

Vending and information kiosks can be part of a vibrant streetscape and add vitality in areas where ground floor retail is not present.



Products by sddRETAIL, GES Global Network illustrate the recommended kiosk style



London Plane Tree shall be the unifying street tree along First Street NE.

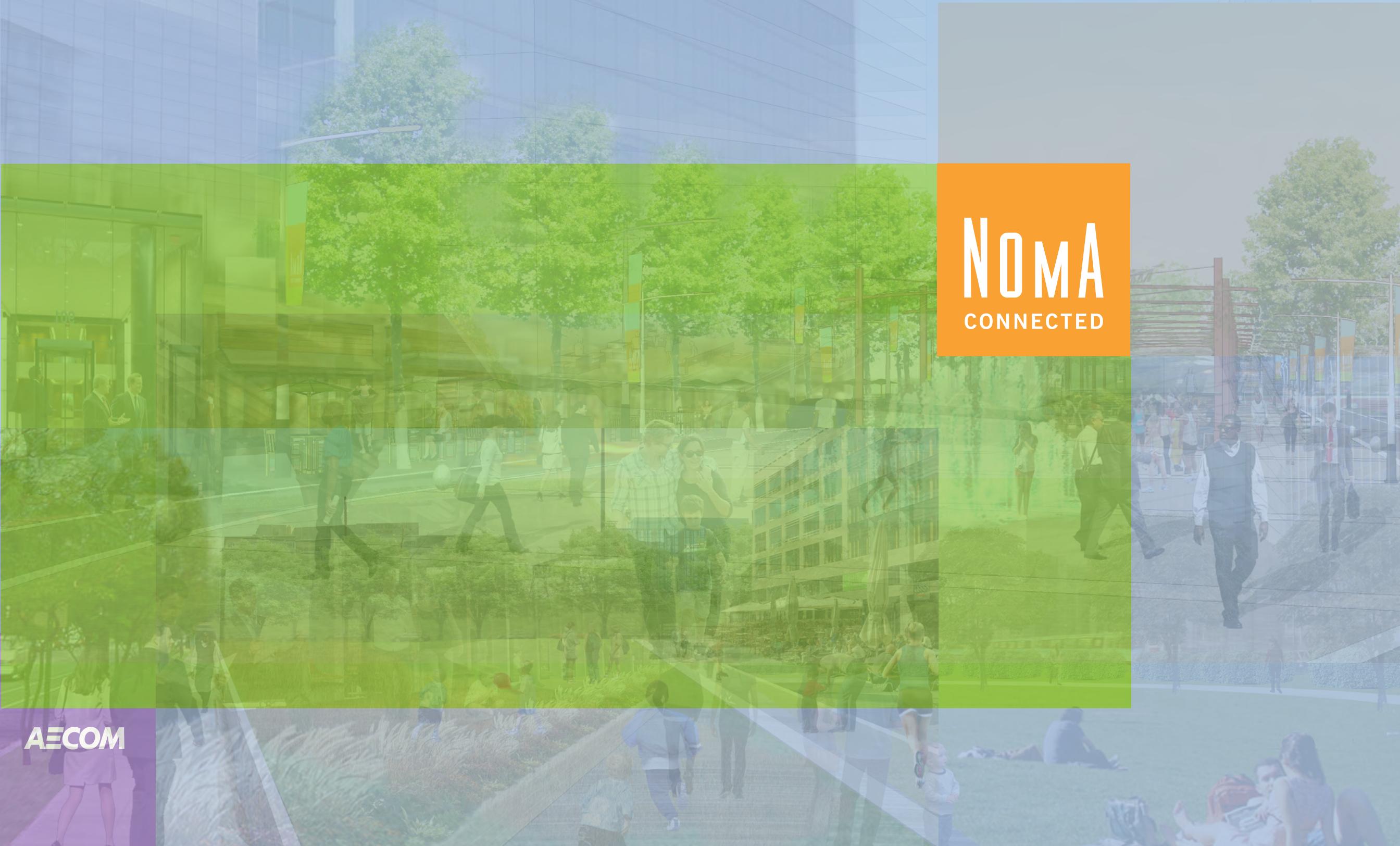


Image: SWA Group



Image: SWA Group

Planting design within the amenity zone shall reflect the dynamic rhythm of the railroad. Linear bands shall be arranged in straight or curvilinear segments running approximately parallel with the curbline. A palette of contrasting colors and textures are recommended to make the rhythm legible. The images below depict examples of the recommended concept.



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