

OCTOBER 2004

# A New way on K STREET

Proceedings from the K Street  
Urban Design Charrette

July 21-23, 2004



SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
AND THE DOWNTOWN D.C. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT







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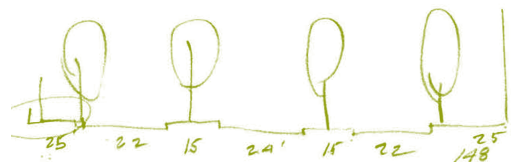
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# A New Way on K



## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### *The K Street Corridor*

Washington's K Street is a high-profile corridor, lined with many of the city's most prestigious law firms, companies, non profits, restaurants, and shops. The street also serves as a major east-west thoroughfare, linking Georgetown, Mount Vernon Square, and Capitol Hill. Yet, despite its central location and its prominence as a successful commercial corridor, the street is not regarded as one of Washington's grand boulevards. It lacks a strong urban design presence, suffers from serious traffic congestion, and is missing the amenities that are appropriate for a corridor so vital to the city's economic well-being.

Within the framework of Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the nation's capital, the monumental core, and emerging waterfronts, K Street plays a crucial role because of its central location in the downtown neighborhood. With the right vision, K Street could be transformed into a great civic space; a place that is pleasant and attractive for workers, residents, and visitors alike. It can also be an efficient transit corridor that effectively moves people across the city.

Washington currently has an enviable opportunity to transform this major street into the high-profile amenity-filled avenue that the city deserves. A recent decision by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to resurface and construct exclusive transit lanes along K Street presents a valuable opportunity to explore alternative visions for the future of this important corridor. K Street has the potential to become more than just the commercial center of the nation's capital—it can also become a vibrant and memorable address in the monumental city.

At the request of DDOT, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) organized a working group to review DDOT's K Street Transitway Study and to recommend a preferred alternative. The working group included members from several stakeholder groups including DDOT, the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP), the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the Downtown D.C. Business Improvement District (Downtown BID), and the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District.

The working group discussed the need and desire to transform K Street into a great urban boulevard. In response, NCPC and the Downtown BID agreed to organize and host the K Street Design Charrette—a forum of nationally renowned urban design and transportation experts—to independently assess K Street and formulate a unified urban design vision for the corridor. As part of the charrette process, the panel would also translate their vision into urban design recommendations for K Street, which DDOT could use in developing the final K Street design.

The design panel met July 21 to 23, 2004 and attended informational briefings, took walking and driving tours of the street, and conducted interviews with various stakeholder groups. At the conclusion of the event, the panel presented its findings to NCPC, the Downtown BID, DDOT, and other interested stakeholders. Their vision, detailed in this report, seeks to transform this high-profile street into something more—a great transit corridor and a grand civic space.

## BACKGROUND: D.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STUDY



From June 2003 to May 2004 the District Department of Transportation studied the feasibility of constructing exclusive median transit lanes between Mount Vernon Square and Washington Circle as part of a future K Street resurfacing project. There are currently eight different Metro bus routes that use the K Street corridor; the DDOT K Street Transitway Study showed that exclusive median transit lanes could reduce travel times for these buses. In addition, exclusive median transit lanes could facilitate future Downtown Circulator and light rail transit service along K Street. The Circulator will provide affordable and easily navigable transit service for downtown workers, visitors and residents starting in early 2005.

The existing typical K Street cross section includes a 19-foot sidewalk, a 20-foot service road, a 10-foot median, and two 12-foot lanes for "through" traffic. The service road is divided into one 8-foot parking lane and a 12-foot access lane for local and right-turning traffic (Figure 1).

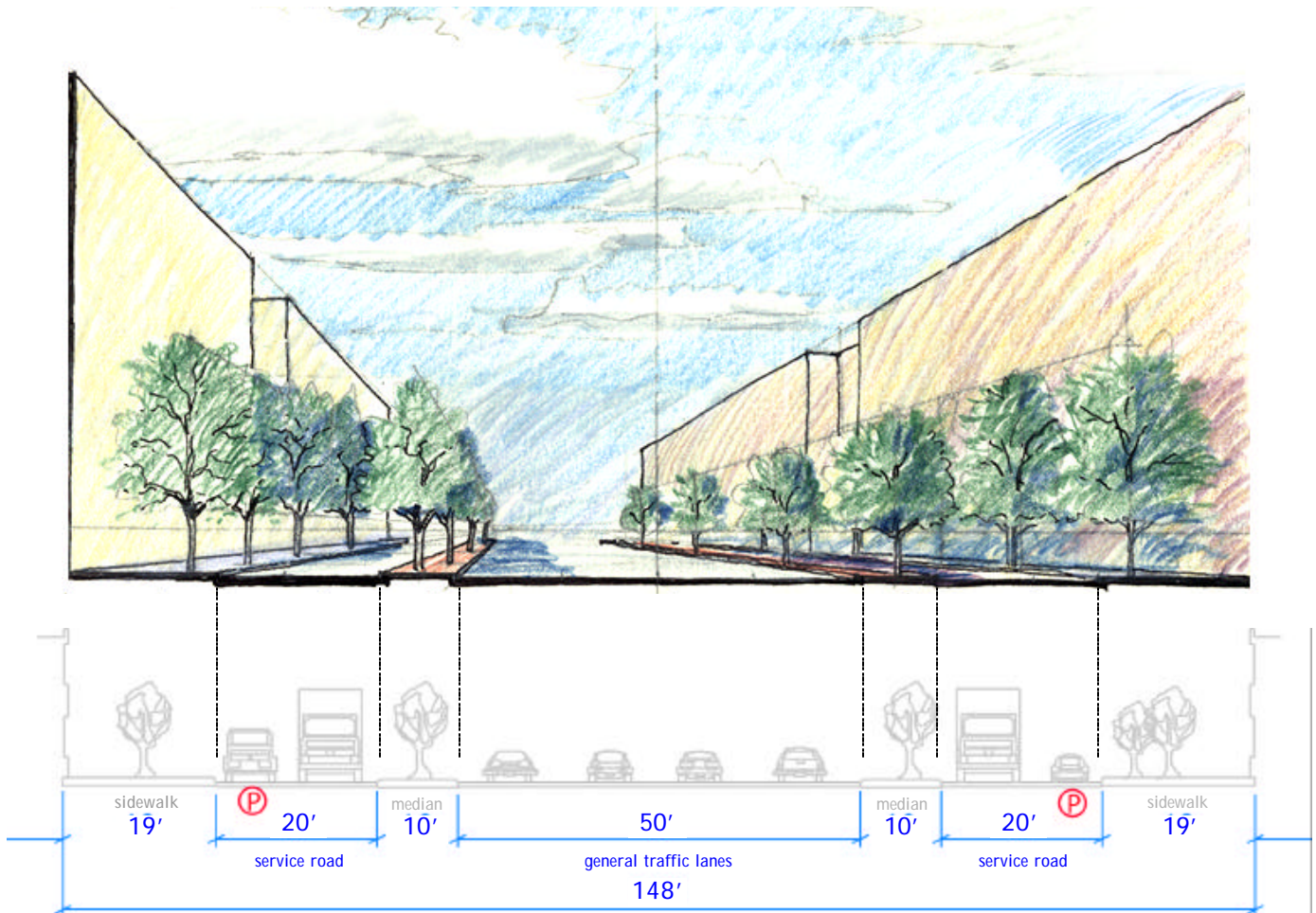


Figure 1 – Existing K Street typical cross section

Figure 2 shows one of the cross section alternatives identified in the DDOT K Street Transitway Study. This option was also considered by the K Street charrette panel during the vision study. The transitway cross section maintains the existing sidewalk width of 19 feet along both sides of the street and includes one parking/travel lane for on-street parking during off-peak hours and two travel lanes along each side of the street. The transitway consists of two 12-foot lanes, and the cross section contains a 10-foot median along each side of the transitway, which separates the transit lanes from the other travel lanes along K Street. The primary advantage of the median transitway design alternative is the physical separation of the transit lanes from general travel lanes, which would permit higher operating speeds and improved schedule reliability.

The second design alternative considered by the K Street panel would allow for curb lane transit service (Figure 3). The curbside transit design proposes 30-foot-wide sidewalks along each side of the street with bump-outs at the intersections. The bump-outs would widen the sidewalks and decrease the street width at pedestrian crossings.

The curbside transit design also includes an 8-foot permanent on-street parking lane, a 12-foot-wide exclusive transit lane, two 10.5-foot-wide travel lanes on each side of the street and a 6-foot median. The primary advantage of the curbside transit design is that transit stops are located on the outside curb giving transit riders and pedestrians a more pleasant experience because they are closer to amenities and are sheltered by the sidewalk streetscape.

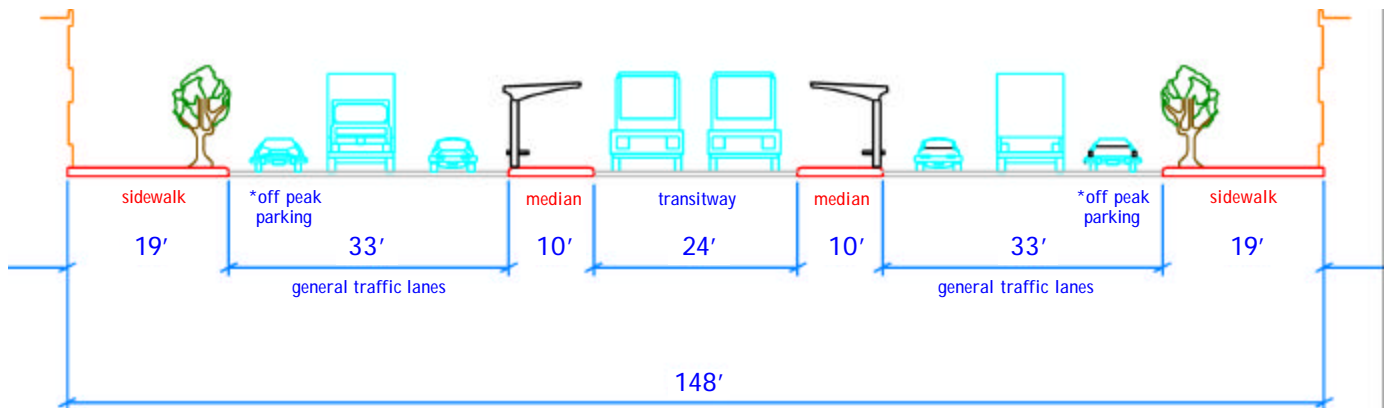


Figure 2 - Median transitway typical cross section

\*Parking would be allowed during off peak hours

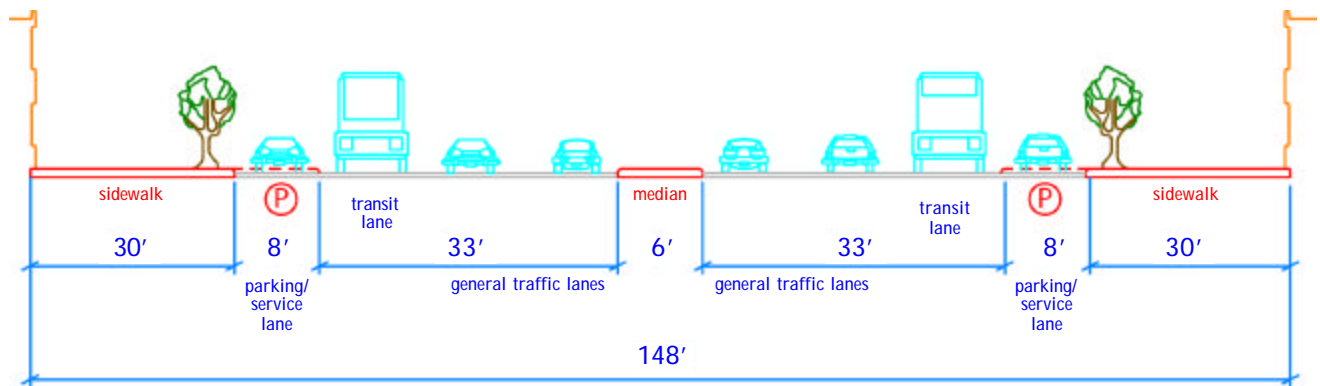
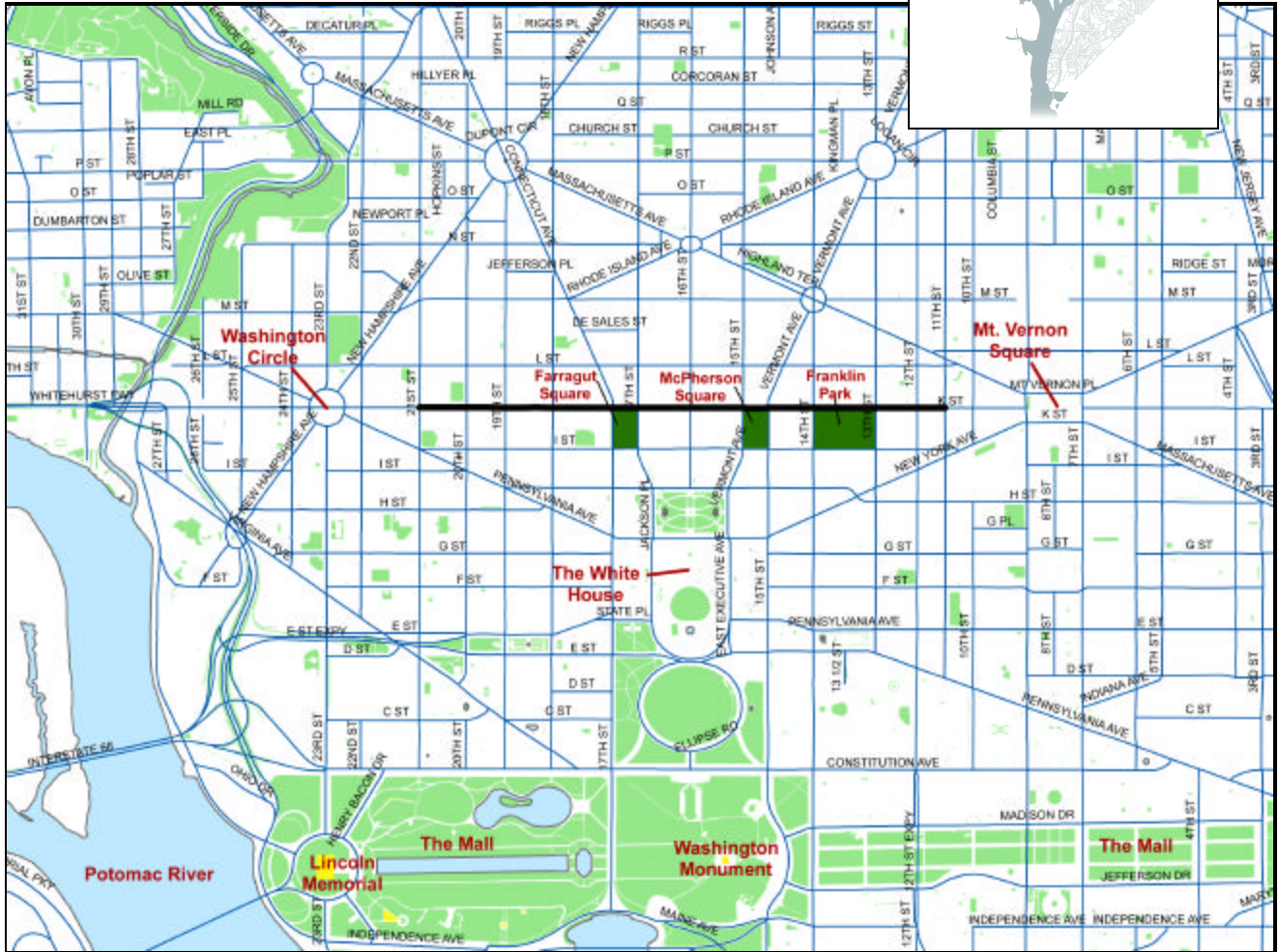
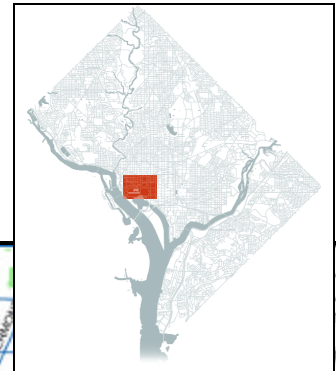


Figure 3 - Curb side transit option typical cross section

K Street study area





## K STREET URBAN DESIGN CHARRETTE

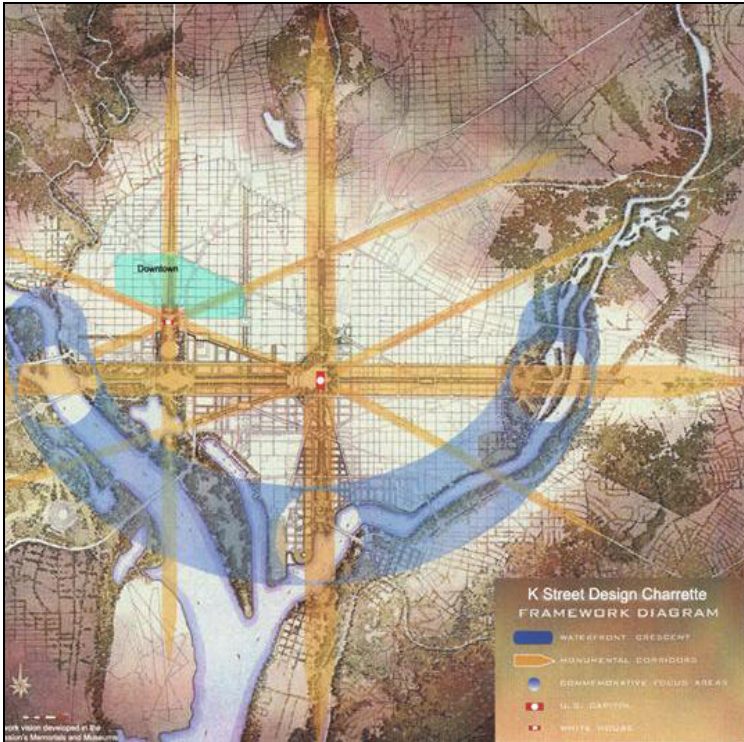
### *The Panel's Assignment*

NCPC and the Downtown BID hosted the K Street Design Charrette with four goals in mind:

- Assess the potential transportation alternatives for K Street from an urban design perspective.
- Strengthen the design image of K Street to reflect its importance to the city.
- Identify public amenities and features that benefit the area's workers, transit customers, residents, and visitors.
- Propose an urban design concept that successfully incorporates a transitway while also creating a more pedestrian- and business-friendly environment.

To assist the urban design panel in its study, panel members consulted with numerous K Street stakeholders and considered the following questions:

- What is K Street's identity? What role should K Street play with respect to other downtown streets, such as Pennsylvania Avenue, F Street, Connecticut Avenue, and 7th Street?
- What are the unique assets and opportunities along K Street? Liabilities and challenges? How will these issues be addressed in a redesign of the street?
- How well are K Street amenities currently serving workers? Transit customers? Visitors? Residents? Others? Which amenities are lacking or need improvement?
- What are the urban design advantages and disadvantages of locating a transitway along the curb? Within a median? How will these alternatives affect the pedestrian experience? How will these alternatives impact adjacent buildings, including parking and loading entrances and ground-floor uses?
- Are there distinct districts or precincts within the K Street corridor? Should the design of K Street reflect each district's unique character or should it focus on unifying the entire corridor?
- How can the redesign accommodate vehicular-oriented rush hour needs and the midday and evening pedestrian crowds? What is the right balance?
- What are some of the design considerations for new transit amenities, including shelters and canopies? What should be included in an amenities package? Where are the best locations for transit stops?
- How should the transitway, especially the curbside option, relate to the historic parks? Are there other open space needs along the K Street corridor?



Washington's central business district in the context of monumental corridors and the waterfront crescent



Figure 4 – Historical photo\* of K Street circa 1917



Figure 5 – Historical photo\* of Pennsylvania Avenue with streetcars in the middle of the street in 1959



Figure 6 – Historical photo\* of New York Avenue with trolleyway in the middle of the street and trees located directly adjacent to the trolleyway in 1948

## THE PANEL'S FINDINGS:

### *A New Vision for K Street*

This report discusses the panel's findings in the categories of K Street Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. It outlines observations regarding historical street design in Washington, D.C., which the panel found to be relevant; summarizes stakeholder opinions regarding K Street today and future opportunities; and details how the vision for the corridor should be implemented.

### *K Street Yesterday*

The design panel found significant precedence and inspiration for its K Street vision from various historical records of Washington, D.C. The following items summarize relevant elements that were used to formulate the design panel's recommendations:

- K Street was originally a tree-lined, residential street, as shown in Figure 4.
- In the middle of the 20th century, streetcars transported people on Pennsylvania Avenue and New York Avenue along tracks that were located in the center of the roadway, as shown in Figure 5.
- Trees were located adjacent to a median transitway along New York Avenue, as shown in Figure 6.
- The service roads located along K Street were added prior to the mid-1950s, during an era when automobiles were glamorized.
- The street trees located along K Street were moved back from the edge of the street during the 1960s, and the buildings were moved closer to the street edge.

### *K Street Today*

The design panel interviewed many key stakeholders during the charrette process, including business owners, property managers, local urban design experts, and managers from the National Park Service, WMATA, and the District government.

Stakeholders expressed that the K Street service lanes generally do not function well, that service and parking vehicles frequently conflict with transit and pedestrians, and that there is frequent traffic congestion along the corridor. Additionally, stakeholders told the design panel that K Street had the potential to become a great street and should be redesigned with a focus on transit and pedestrians. Stakeholders also suggested that K Street should function as a major east-west transit link in the city.

\* Photos courtesy of Washington Through Two Centuries, The Monacelli Press, 2004



## *The opportunity now exists to achieve a great street.*

### *K Street Tomorrow: A New Vision for K Street*

The panel agreed that the redesign of K Street presents a tremendous opportunity for the city to achieve a great street, a green boulevard, a renewed focus on downtown, and the start of a new generation of special streets for the city. With the success of Metro and recent mixed-use development, Washington, D.C. has become a more transit-oriented and walkable city. The K Street vision would raise the quality of the street to the same level as the quality of recent and proposed development projects in the District.

K Street has to accommodate many and sometimes conflicting transportation and land-use demands: service and delivery vehicles; pedestrian movement; access to parking, sidewalk vendors, and transit; regional and local automobile traffic; and the needs of office tenants and retail customers. As the street assumes a more prominent role in the civic life of the city, some of these functions would need to be reconsidered, rebalanced, and possibly redirected or relocated.

#### A Great Street

A reconstituted K Street should be recognized as a great and beautiful street that rivals major downtown corridors throughout the world such as Fifth Avenue in New York and Michigan Avenue in Chicago. As a great street, K Street would have wide sidewalks with pedestrian amenities, robust streetscapes with mature trees, and straight curb lines. K Street would be safe, attractive, and conducive to activities that attract people not only during the day, but also during the evening and on weekends.

#### A Green Boulevard

K Street would become a green boulevard with a more robust, continuous streetscape characterized by an extensive tree canopy and additional landscaping. As a green boulevard, K Street would extend Washington's civic framework of great parks and green space.

#### A Transit Corridor

K Street would be a significant east-west link in the larger transit system that extends throughout the city and would accommodate the needs of the city's transit riders. The redesigned street would accommodate the city's plans to develop an intra-city transit system, including a Downtown Circulator, express buses, and future light rail.

#### A Civic Place

K Street would be a more active and vibrant civic place with a greater mix of uses. The future K Street would be part of a stronger park system and encourage activity seven days a week.

#### A Prominent Address

In order for the street to assert a strong urban design presence commensurate with its reputation as a prestigious address, a redesigned K Street would remove and relocate its service functions. Alley uses do not belong in front of buildings on a great street.

#### An Integrated Street

The K Street redesign effort should not be a one-project endeavor—it should build the center of a community. Subsequent property developments would help realize the vision over time. The results would be an integrated street that is more than a collection of isolated improvements.

After carefully weighing stakeholder demands and a variety of design ideas, the charrette panel produced a framework vision to serve as a foundation for the redesign and reconstruction of K Street. The most significant components of this vision are: the Green Boulevard, the Transit Corridor, the Parks, the Access, and the Sidewalks.



*It is time to bring the streets up to the quality of the other investments.*

## K Street: The Green Boulevard

### Existing Corridor

While the K Street vision calls for a continuous, green, park-like boulevard, today's K Street has an intermittent, incoherent streetscape that is unable to thrive. The existing sidewalk and medians are too narrow to accommodate large street trees and substantial landscaping. As a result, the street trees are generally small and lackluster. Additionally, salt spread along K Street during the winter and the constant noise and air pollution from traffic place further stress on the trees.

Although the design panel envisions K Street with a unified identity, there is no consistency to the landscaping. Currently, property managers assume responsibility for landscaping their individual properties, which detracts from the street having a unified identity.

### Future Corridor

The proposed K Street cross section envisions a green, park-like environment, a continuous tree canopy, and more robust landscaping (Figure 7). This park-like corridor would extend green space to other parts of the District and contribute to the city's extensive park and parkway system.

The proposed cross section contains 25-foot-wide sidewalks and relocated 15-foot medians, which separate a transitway from the regular travel lanes (Figure 8). The wider medians and sidewalks can accommodate a greater soil volume that would sustain larger, more mature street trees.

To ensure that the future streetscape is successfully implemented and maintained, the District should treat the cost of improving the streetscape as a long-term capital investment. In this context, the District and local leadership should consider a larger dedicated budget for the streetscape.



Figure 7 – Proposed K Street Green Boulevard with a green, park-like environment

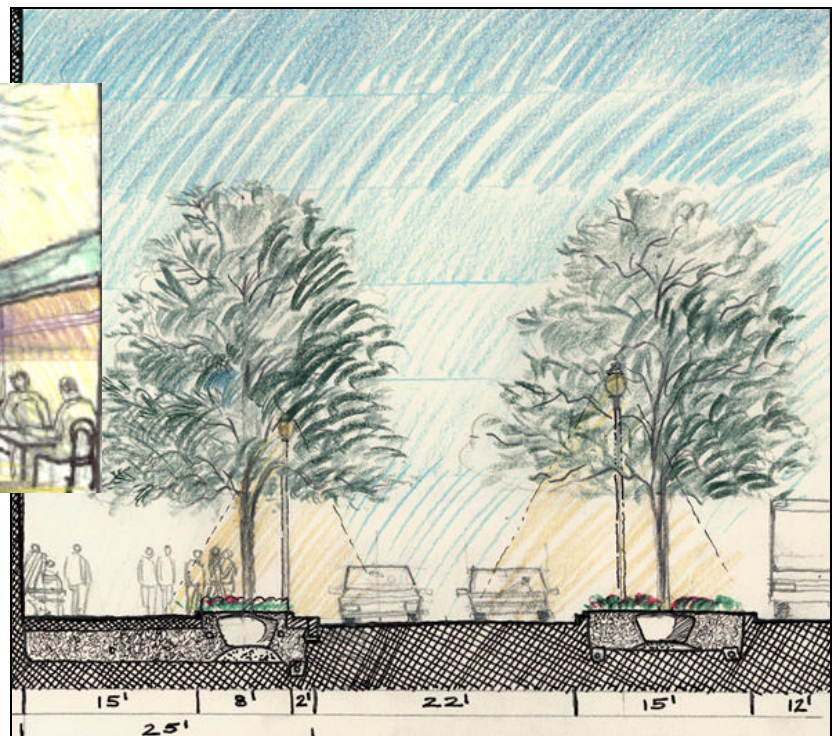


Figure 8 – Proposed K Street Green Boulevard cross section with wider sidewalks and wider medians

## K Street: The Transit Corridor

### Existing Corridor

The K Street corridor is an essential piece of the intra-city transit network. Today, however, the corridor does not function well for transit because traffic congestion increases bus travel time and compromises service reliability. As a result, people perceive driving as a more attractive alternative and increase traffic congestion along K Street.

Transit ridership is also hindered by a lack of adequate transit amenities. The existing medians on K Street are too narrow to provide adequately sized waiting areas for transit patrons (Figure 9). The medians are also too narrow to accommodate a substantive streetscape that would provide an attractive and sheltered outdoor environment for waiting transit patrons.

### Future Corridor

The design panel envisions K Street as a major transit corridor and an important link in an extensive District-wide bus, Circulator, and light rail transit network. Transit is a crucial element in the overall improvement of mobility along the K Street corridor, and the District's commitment to transit would be manifested in the construction of the transitway and the implementation of the Downtown Circulator.

While the panel strongly considered the advantages of the curbside transitway solution, it concluded that the exclusive median transitway would improve travel times for a number of reasons, including:

- Transit vehicles are out of the flow of other traffic and therefore, the rest of the traffic would not be slowed by buses that are picking up or dropping off customers at bus stops.
- Transit vehicles would not get stuck in traffic.
- Transit vehicles would not have to compete with private vehicles, service and delivery vehicles, and autos queued at parking garage entrances when maneuvering to pick up/drop off passengers at bus stops.

Even if service vehicles and deliveries are better managed or relocated away from K Street and on-street parking is removed, transit vehicle operations along a curb alignment would continue to be delayed by traffic movements into and out of existing parking garages and alleys.

The proposed cross section for K Street has a two-lane exclusive transitway located in the center of the street, which is separated from the other mixed traffic lanes by two 15-foot medians (Figure 10). The future transitway would have a width of 24 feet and could accommodate two 12-foot lanes for buses or light rail transit vehicles.

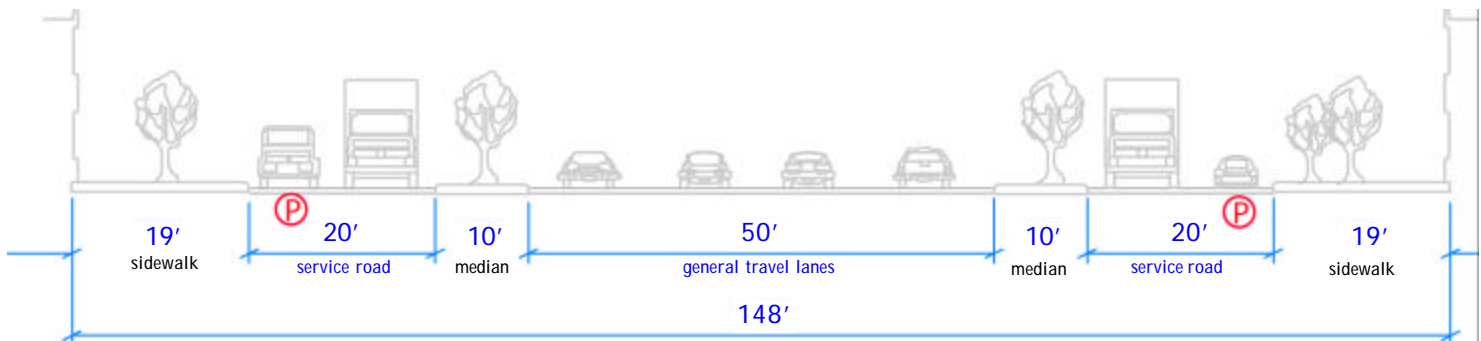


Figure 9 – Existing K Street cross section



Figure 10 – Proposed K Street vision with exclusive transitway and widened medians

*The panel feels that its vision offers a scheme that best reflects balance among the different street uses.*

Construction of the transitway, realignment of existing bus routes, and the implementation of the Circulator would result in fewer buses turning onto and off of K Street. A reduction in bus turning movements would increase transit reliability and reduce potential conflicts with pedestrians and other traffic.

Wider median islands would provide ample space for benches and shelters, and every stop would be accessible, attractive, and safe for all transit patrons, including the disabled. The additional median space would also allow more extensive landscaping and better accommodate larger street trees along K Street, which would extend the same, attractive sidewalk environment out to transit stop areas.

The transitway would only be used by Metro and Circulator buses, which would serve District residents, workers, and visitors. The panel recommends exclusive use of the transitway by Metro and Circulator vehicles so that these transit systems may gain maximum benefit from the publicly funded transitway and other related street improvements. A separate exclusive transitway would demonstrate a serious interest in promoting public transit along the corridor by the District.

## K Street: The Parks

### Existing Corridor

With respect to parks, K Street currently falls short of the future vision because the three major parks along the corridor are not well integrated into the streetscape. While the three federal parks do currently enhance the corridor by providing a green refuge from the existing street environment, they are isolated from the overall vitality of the street.

Today, K Street's southern curb line is discontinuous because each of the three parks project beyond the southern curb line. The discontinuous curb line detracts from the important nature of the street.

The three parks, located between 13th Street and 17th Street, are Farragut Square, McPherson Square, and Franklin Park (Figure 11). Farragut Square and McPherson Square are historically significant parks because they are included in the L'Enfant Plan and have a physical connection to the White House and monumental core.

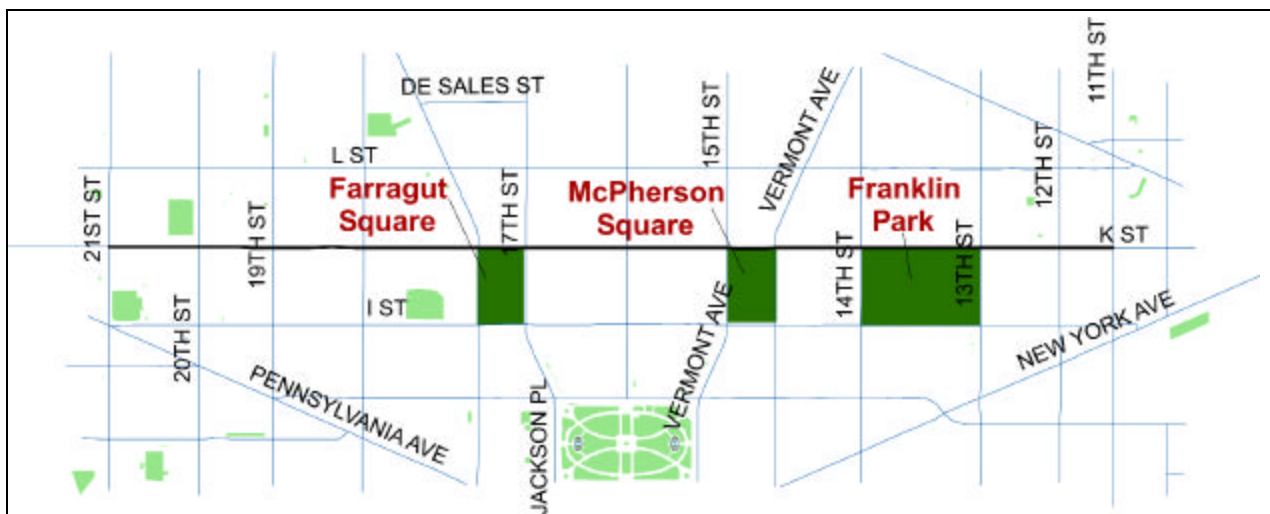


Figure 11 – Three federal parks along the corridor include Farragut Square, McPherson Square, and Franklin Park.

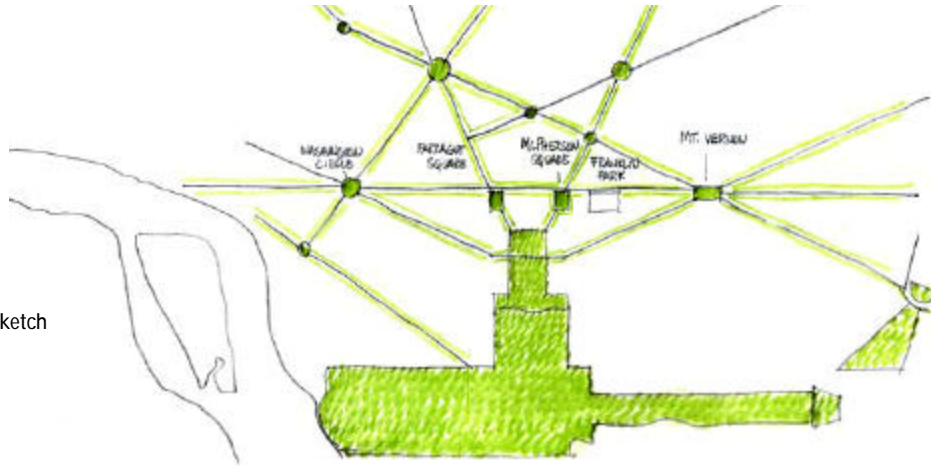


Figure 12 – Park network sketch

### Future Corridor

The design panel envisions K Street as a green, park-like boulevard and the existing park space and future streetscape should enhance each other to promote a fully integrated green corridor. The parks contribute to the green nature of K Street and help to create a more welcoming civic space along the street. The parks should become seamless extensions of the new K Street green space in order to promote more active uses of these park spaces.

The future K Street would have straight continuous curb lines and a uniform cross section that would enhance the corridor's iconic image. As a result, the panel recommends the following actions:

- Relocate K Street's southern curb along Farragut Square 27 feet to the south.
- Relocate K Street's southern curb along McPherson Square 20 feet to the south.
- Relocate K Street's southern curb along Franklin Square 18 feet to the south.

Straightening the curbline would impact the three parks. However, any transferred parkland would become integrated into the future green streetscape of K Street and ultimately be enhanced by its location adjacent to the new park-like street space. The panel recognizes the historic nature of these parks and understands that much discussion and debate must occur before a decision is made regarding these parks.

Since Franklin Park is not part of the L'Enfant Plan, the future of the park may become more of a local neighborhood park as the surrounding land uses become more residential (Figure 12). The east end of the park has been designated as a site for a national memorial which would complement the Barry Memorial on the west side of the park.

### K Street: Access

#### Existing Corridor

The existing service roads, alley access points, and parking garage entrances along K Street all detract from the urban design quality of the street space and the prominence of the street. Other great streets, such as Chicago's Michigan Avenue and New York City's Fifth Avenue, do not have on-street parking, service access, curb cuts, or discontinuous curb lines.

The service roads on K Street are often dysfunctional because vehicles frequently use the service lanes for double parking and as drop-off/pick-up areas (Figure 13). These illegal maneuvers sometimes interfere with vehicles turning right onto adjacent streets. The dysfunctional nature of the service roads also causes service vehicles to park illegally in the through traffic lanes along K Street in an attempt to avoid getting trapped on the service roads by double-parked vehicles.

In addition, direct parking garage access impacts K Street as vehicle queues form along the service roads and into the "through" traffic lanes. The traffic generated by alleys and parking garages creates a friction on the through traffic, contributing to traffic congestion along K Street.

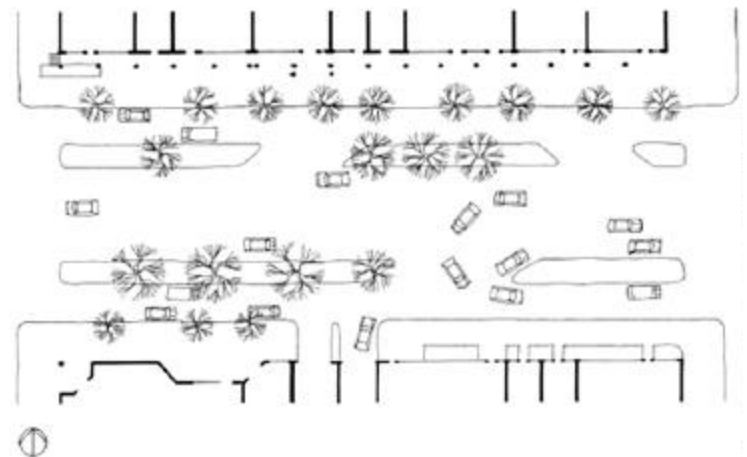


Figure 13 – Overhead view sketch of K Street's service lanes and slip ramps  
Courtesy of The Boulevard Book, The MIT Press, 2002



Figure 14 – Photo of Michigan Avenue

*Future Corridor*

On-street parking, service roads, and access to parking garages would be eliminated in the K Street vision in order to improve the street's urban design and overall image as well as to improve transit flow (Figures 15 and 16). Elimination of the service drives, alleys, and parking garage driveways would occur as the corridor is redeveloped. The design vision elevates the status of K Street to one of a great street, such as Michigan Avenue as seen above (Figure 14).

By eliminating the K Street service roads, traffic patterns along the corridor would be simplified and illegal maneuvers such as double parking, and passenger drop-off and pick-up would be significantly reduced or eliminated. The elimination of illegal maneuvers along the corridor would enhance traffic flow and help to reduce traffic congestion.

The relocation of parking garage access from K Street to other cross streets, which is a long-term goal, would help to minimize traffic congestion caused by queues of vehicles entering parking garages and turning movements of vehicles exiting garages. In the short-term, the city should prepare design and access guidelines for future K Street development to prohibit future service and auto access from K Street.

**K Street: The Sidewalks**

*Existing Corridor*

Although K Street has the potential to become a very walkable street due to its level topography, the current sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate pedestrian amenities, such as outdoor seating areas that would create a vibrant, civic place (Figure 17).

The current pedestrian environment along K Street is diminished by the numerous alley and parking garage driveways, which disrupt the continuity of the sidewalk. Additionally, the large number of driveways creates potential vehicle-pedestrian conflicts, which reduces pedestrian safety and comfort.

*Future Corridor*

The design vision for K Street calls for wider sidewalks to accommodate more pedestrian amenities and street activity. The proposed cross section includes 25-foot-wide sidewalks that create a more vibrant street space (Figures 18 and 19).

The pedestrian environment along K Street is also significantly improved with the future relocation of alley and parking garage driveways because frequent sidewalk interruptions are eliminated. These improvements help to unify the street and create a more prominent, iconic street.

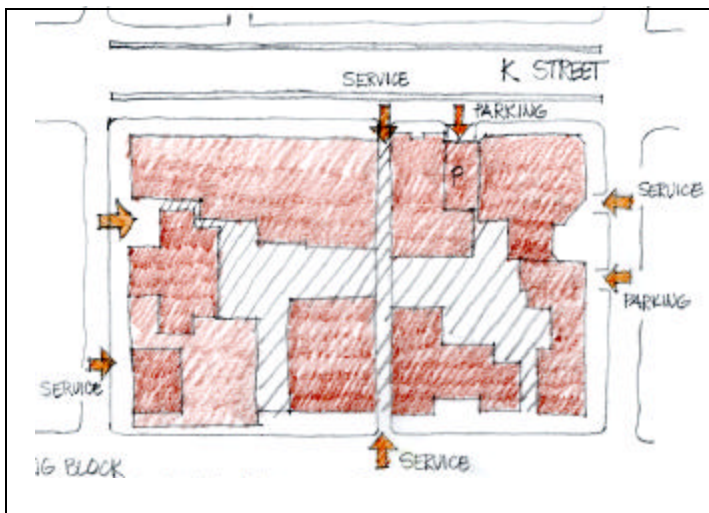


Figure 15 – Existing block access

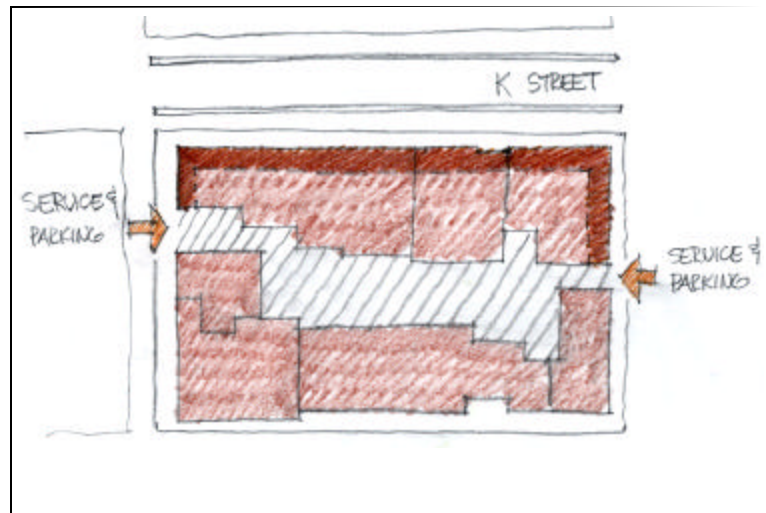


Figure 16 – Proposed block access



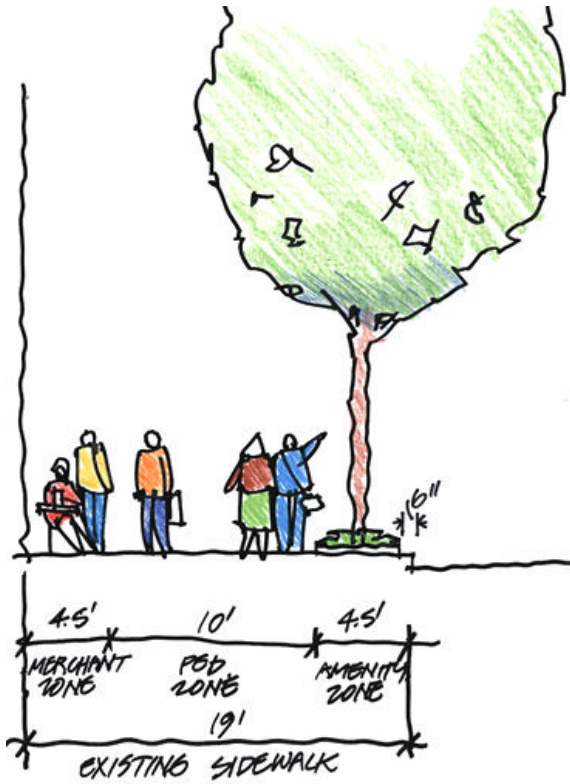


Figure 17 – Existing sidewalk activity



Figure 18 – Future sidewalk activity

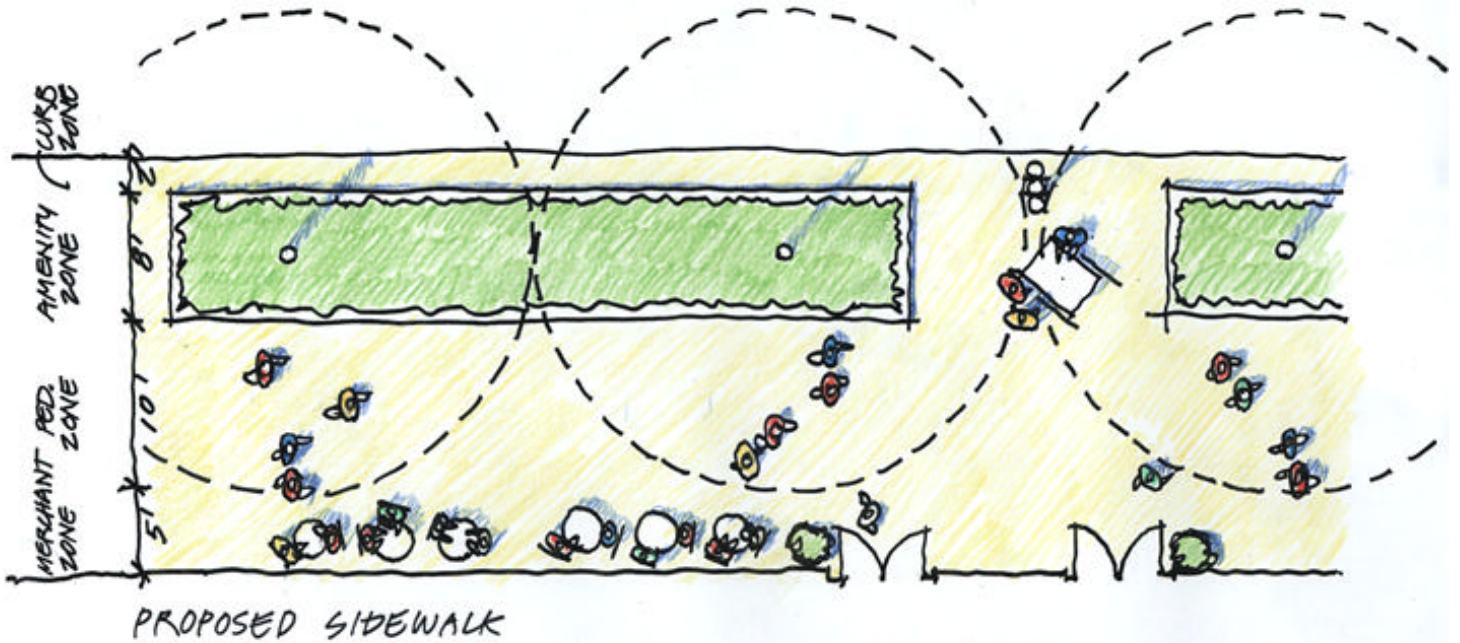
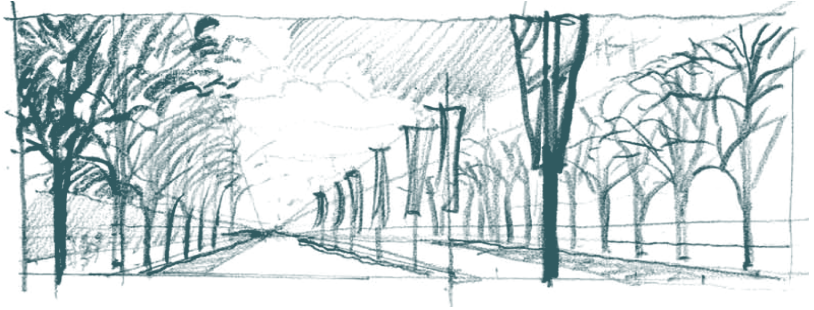


Figure 19 – Proposed streetscape design

## SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



### *Key Issues*

While K Street possesses many attributes of an iconic boulevard, such as a centralized downtown location, wide sidewalks, three major parks, medians, excellent transit accessibility, and a diverse mix of office space, ground-floor retail, and restaurants, the street has not fully realized its potential. K Street connects Georgetown to the re-emerging downtown and Capitol Hill districts, and is adjacent to thriving residential neighborhoods, but it does not unify them.

There are many legitimate, competing uses in the K Street right-of-way; however, the transport capacity of the street is compromised by the current design. More specifically:

- Increasing traffic volumes—especially with the closure of parts of Pennsylvania Avenue and E Street—place additional pressure on K Street, which functioned above capacity even before these closures.
- Dysfunctional service lanes are utilized for too many incompatible activities such as: on-street parking for service vehicles (which park for free), double-parking, queuing for parking garages, and dropping off/picking up passengers. In addition, vehicles entering and exiting the service drives sometimes make illegal and often dangerous movements across the travel lanes. These vehicles often cut off buses at service stops, increasing the risk of accidents.
- On-street parking in front of large office buildings is a potential security risk.
- Service functions along K Street give the street the look of an alley rather than the appearance of a great street.
- Numerous driveways (mostly entrances to parking garages) and alley entrances interrupt the pedestrian flow and compromise the aesthetics of the pedestrian environment along the street.
- Median islands, which are used for bus stops, are too narrow to provide an adequate amount of space for transit patrons, and few of the medians are accessible to wheelchairs or other mobility devices.
- Buses are frequently forced to maneuver around delivery and/or service vehicles that are stopped in the curbside travel lanes. The service vehicles, which are illegally stopped in the travel lanes, slow bus service along K Street and sometimes make it difficult for buses to properly serve their stops along the median islands.
- The future Downtown Circulator—a major investment in transit and an opportunity to make transit an attractive alternative to driving downtown—would be hampered by the same traffic and bus problems that currently plague existing bus routes along K Street.

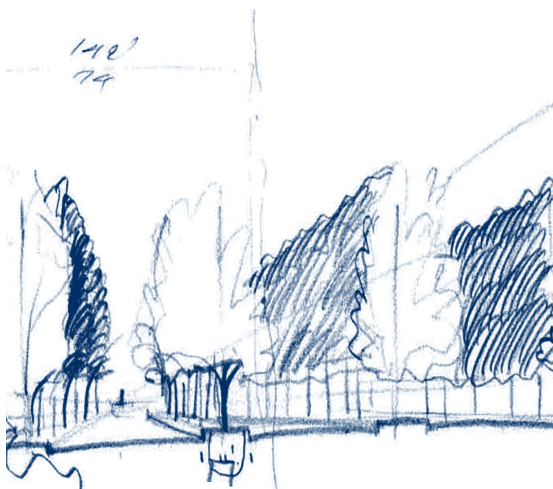




Figure 20 – Proposed K Street corridor, with a consistent corridor width. Areas that need to be widened are highlighted in yellow.

**Key Recommendations**

■ **A Consistent Street Width**

K Street should have a consistent street width of 148 feet by maintaining the northern curb line and widening the street, where needed, to straighten the southern curb line (Figure 20).

■ **Eliminate Service Roads**

The service roads should be eliminated so that the K Street corridor may better serve through and local traffic, transit, deliveries, and pedestrians. Due to the closure of parts of Pennsylvania Avenue and E Street, increasing the effective capacity of K Street to move people and vehicles is all the more important.

Removal of the service roads along K Street would displace on-street parking to local garages. Furthermore, eliminating service lanes also reduces the inclination of pedestrians to make illegal street crossings; and an uninterrupted median transitway precludes mid-block left-turn and U-turn movements into parking garages.

■ **Eliminate Parking Garage and Alley Access**

In the long term, access to the parking garages and alleys along K Street should be relocated to cross streets and/or parallel streets.

■ **Extensive Tree Canopy and Additional Landscaping**

K Street should have an extensive tree canopy and enhanced landscaping all along the corridor (Figure 21). An extensive tree canopy along K Street would protect pedestrians from the weather, unify the street, and provide a more park-like setting.

■ **One Organization to Oversee Implementation**

A single organization or agency should manage the implementation and maintenance of the K Street corridor improvements. The managing organization would ensure maintenance of the street's new uses.

The design panel recognizes that it will be necessary for the existing working group, local leadership, and the general public to scrutinize and analyze this vision with the same standards used in DDOT's K Street Transitway Study. However, the panel feels that this vision best reflects balance among the different street uses. By reordering the current demands on K Street and by providing a different balance between the uses, the design panel believes that the street can become an iconic boulevard and destination that is more community-focused and that functions better as a transportation corridor.

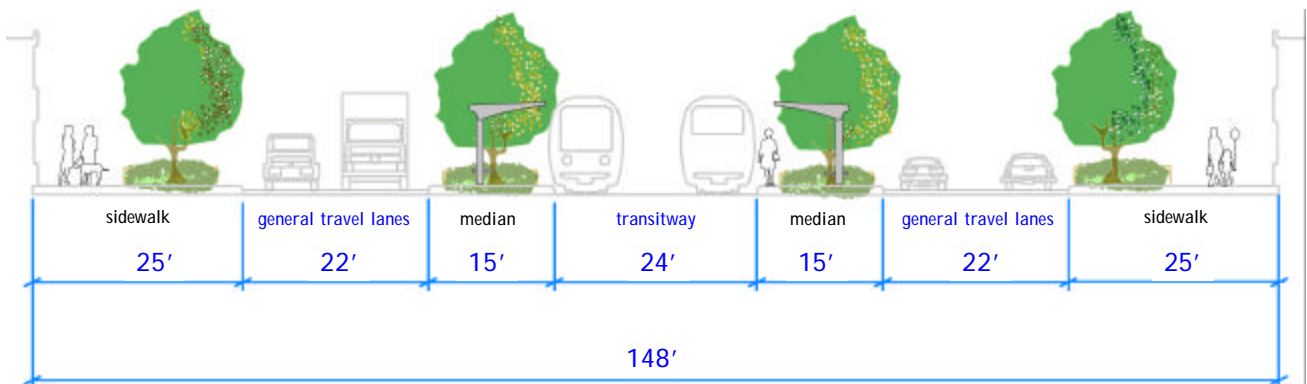
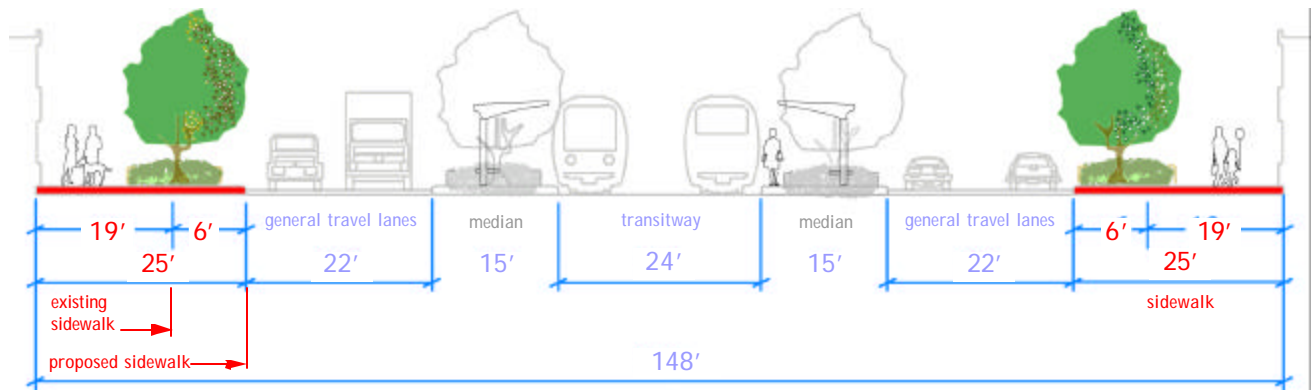
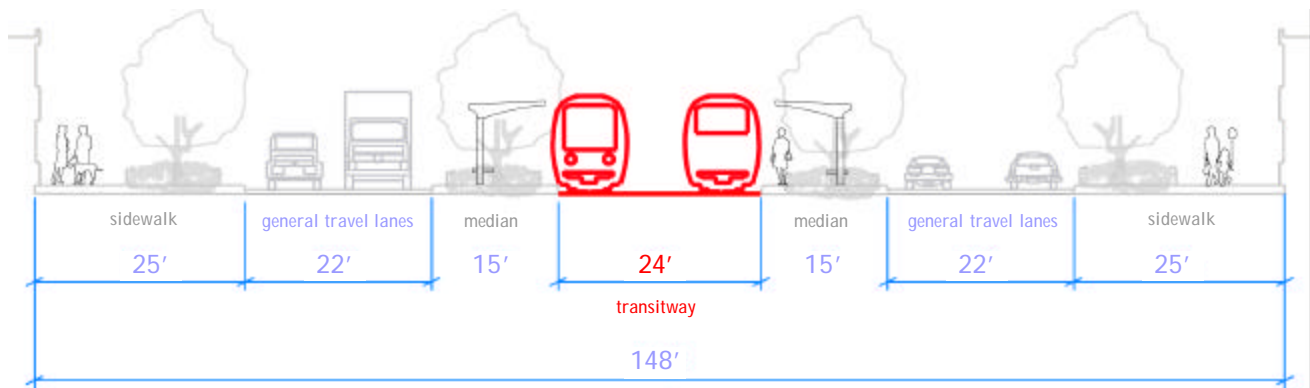


Figure 21 – Cross section of proposed K Street vision highlighting more extensive streetscape



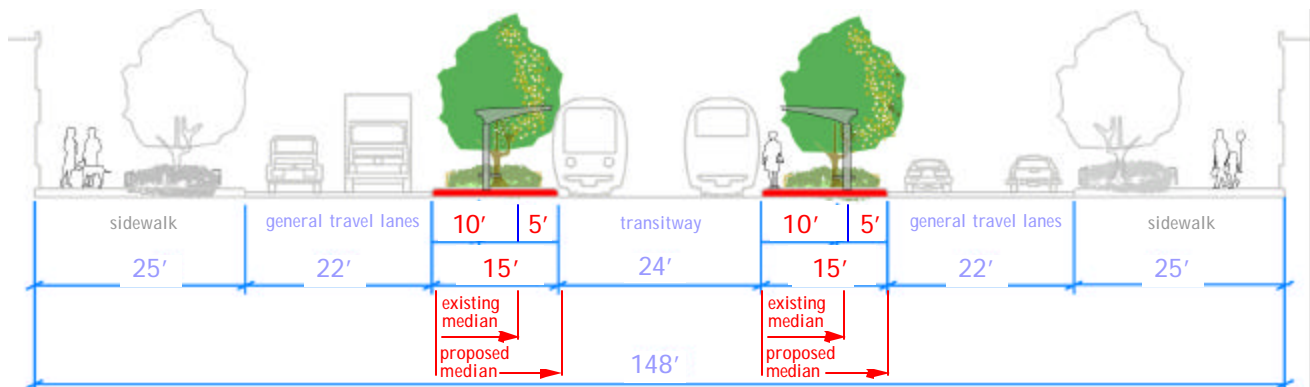
- **Wider Sidewalks** – The sidewalks along K Street should be widened from 19 to 25 feet to better accommodate the existing pedestrian traffic, allow for more pedestrian amenities, and allow for larger trees and a more robust streetscape (Figure 22).

Figure 22 – Proposed K Street vision highlighted with widened sidewalks



- **Median Transitway** – K Street should have a 24-foot exclusive transitway located in the median that may be used for bus and light-rail transit (Figure 23). The exclusive transitway will separate the transit and non-transit vehicles along the street. As a result, transit service reliability will be increased and transit will be perceived as a more attractive transportation alternative to driving in downtown Washington.

Figure 23 – Proposed K Street vision highlighted with exclusive transitway



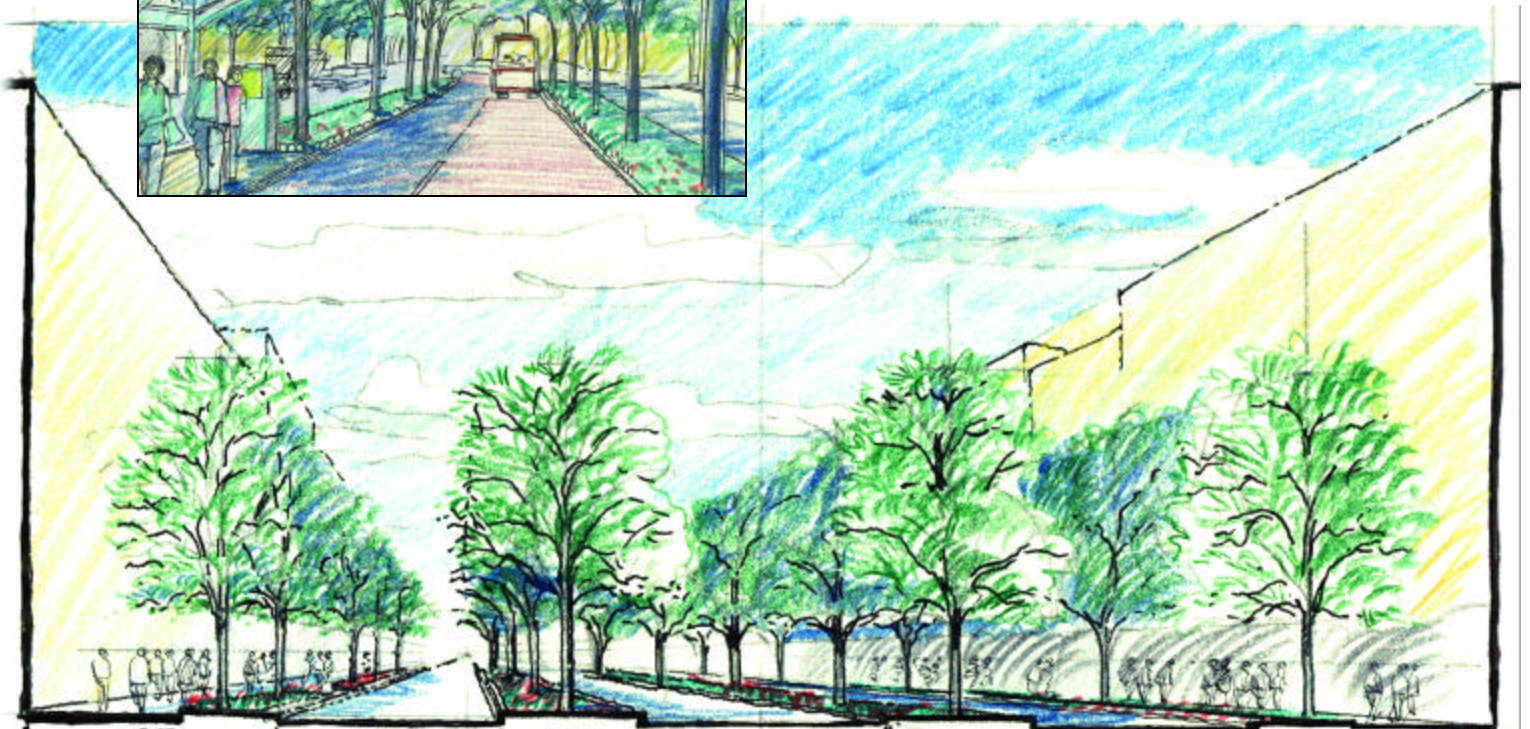
- **Wider Medians** - The medians should be widened from 10 to 15 feet and relocated to separate the median transitway from the mixed-traffic lanes (Figure 24). The 15-foot median width will provide adequate space for larger trees, a more robust streetscape, and sheltered transit stops.

Figure 24 – Proposed K Street vision highlighted with widened medians

## NEXT STEPS

K Street has tremendous potential to become a great street. This vision is the first step in achieving that goal. The following actions are the steps needed to turn vision into reality and properly implement the K Street Design Charrette's vision:

- Evaluate this vision using the same rigorous process used to evaluate the other cross section alternatives for the K Street Transitway Study.
- Present this vision to community groups that were not involved in this initial effort.
- Create a conservancy or a special management entity to manage the entire K Street corridor. The successful implementation of the K Street vision depends upon perceived ownership of the street. K Street needs to be designed and managed as a whole in order to reinforce the street's image as a special place and ensure its integrated function.



## ABOUT THE PANEL

Philip J. Enquist (Panel Chair), FAIA  
Partner, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP (Chicago)

Philip Enquist leads the urban design and planning studios in the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Mr. Enquist's work is focused on the rebuilding of inner cities, their commercial centers and neighborhoods, the strengthening of existing city infrastructure of streets and transit, and the preservation of the natural environment.

Bridging the gap between the natural and manmade environments, Mr. Enquist collaborates closely with city agencies and community groups to shape the places where we live and work. He has directed the planning and design of a variety of downtown mixed-use projects, new towns and campus master plans, as well as various retail and recreational planning projects.

Linda Fuller  
General Manager of Bus Operations Oversight  
Chicago Transit Authority (Chicago)

Linda Fuller is the general manager of Bus Operations Oversight at the Chicago Transit Authority. Current projects include implementation of the city's coordinated street furniture program, such as the location and installation of 2,175 bus shelters within the city of Chicago; implementation of a maintenance management information system; a pilot camera enforcement of bus stop lanes; and coordination with the city for special events and construction in the public way.

Ms. Fuller was involved in the coordination of the design of a limited-access busway that connects Chicago's Millennium Park with the McCormick Place Convention Center and she served on an American Public Transportation Association (APTA) peer review panel focused on the location, design, and operational issues of bus stops in Orange County, California. She has been part of a National Academy of Sciences/Transportation Research Board study of unsignalized pedestrian crossings and potential development of a bus stop warrant for inclusion in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Alistair T. McIntosh, ASLA, RIBA  
Principal, Sasaki Associates (Boston)

Alistair McIntosh is a landscape architect with more than 25 years of experience in the planning, physical design, and construction of civic and institutional landscapes. His range of project experience includes the Indianapolis waterfront park and open space system, the New London waterfront park, the Hudson River Park in New York City, and the United States Embassy compound in Seoul, South Korea.

Trained as an architect and a landscape architect, Mr. McIntosh has a detailed understanding of the nature of interdisciplinary collaboration. His landscape design philosophy is structured around three interrelated concepts: the nature of the particular site that is the starting point for the process of place making; the forms of human use and how they shape the occupation of civic spaces; and the act of construction that achieves the tangible reality of made landscapes.

Don C. Miles, FAIA  
Associate Partner, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership  
(Seattle)

Since the 1970s, Don Miles has been one of a small group of urban designers whose research has transformed the way we look at and design public spaces in our cities. From New York to Seattle, Mr. Miles and his colleagues are responsible for making our urban squares, streets, and plazas more inviting, successful, and safe. His work in research and public consensus building has influenced the practice of urban design across the country.

Mr. Miles is a founding board member of Project for Public Spaces, Inc., a non-profit environmental organization based in New York that is dedicated to improving the design quality of public spaces. With more than 35 years of experience, Mr. Miles has specialized in public and commercial facilities, community development guide plans, and historic preservation. He is a frequent lecturer, has been a consultant to numerous cities throughout the country, and is a published author and analyst of design issues relating buildings to their external environments.

Louis J. Slade, PE, PTOE  
 Vice President and Principal, Gorove/Slade Associates  
 (Washington, D.C.)

Louis Slade's diverse experience bridges the disciplines of civil engineering design, urban transportation planning, traffic engineering, land development, environmental analysis, and transportation systems design. Mr. Slade has directed major regional comprehensive transportation planning studies and corridor studies, traffic circulation and transit studies, and parking needs and design optimization studies for central business districts and new developments. He has also devised and analyzed alternative public transportation modal options and developed multi-modal transportation plans incorporating people mover systems.

Mr. Slade has worked closely with public agencies and private developers devising transportation master plans and major thoroughfare plans. He has been instrumental in the creation of transportation systems and roadway networks for large acreage developments. As a leader in the transportation engineering field, Mr. Slade is widely published in leading transportation and planning journals and has been a guest lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, Wayne State University, and Stockton State College.

Ted Wolff, ASLA  
 Principal, Wolff Clements and Associates, Ltd.  
 (Chicago)

Ted Wolff is a registered landscape architect and a principal with Wolff Clements and Associates, Ltd., a landscape architecture and urban design firm located in Chicago. He was head of the landscape architecture practice in the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill prior to starting his own firm, Wolff Associates, in 1990.

Mr. Wolff's project experience and professional interests include urban plazas and streetscapes, open space planning, parks and recreation planning and design, and historic landscape preservation. Mr. Wolff was the principal landscape architect for two recent planning projects in Washington, D.C. that addressed the related areas of urban design and security, Designing for Security in the Nation's Capital, and the National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan, which proposed specific solutions for the integration of urban design, streetscape design, and security. Other streetscape experience includes the State Street Renovation, Randolph Street Market Revitalization, 55th Street Berm and Streetscape, and Randolph Street Theater District, all in Chicago, Illinois.

## ABOUT THE SPONSORS

### National Capital Planning Commission

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) is the federal government's central planning agency for the National Capital Region. NCPC is charged with preserving the unique beauty and historic urban design that have made Washington one of the most admired capital cities in the world. The Commission provides overall planning guidance for federal land and buildings in the National Capital Region, which includes the District of Columbia and the surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia. NCPC reviews the design of federal projects, oversees long-range planning for future development, and monitors capital investment by federal agencies. Through its planning policies and review of development proposals, the Commission seeks to protect and enhance the extraordinary historical, cultural, and natural resources of America's capital.

### Downtown DC Business Improvement District

The Downtown DC Business Improvement District (Downtown BID) is a private non-profit organization that provides safety, hospitality, sanitation, marketing, economic development, and homeless services in Washington. The Downtown BID's mission is to help raise Downtown to world-class standards as a commercial, cultural, and residential destination. The Downtown BID is bounded by the National Mall on the south, Massachusetts Avenue on the north, the U.S. Capitol to the east and the White House to the west. It encompasses all or parts of the Penn Quarter, Gallery Place, Chinatown, McPherson Square, Federal Triangle and Franklin Square neighborhoods. The Downtown BID's territory includes the eastern K Street study area from 11th Street to 16th Street.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Capital Planning Commission, the Downtown DC Business Improvement District, and the K Street Charrette panel appreciate the collective support and contributions of the many agencies, businesses, and individuals who participated in this study. A special thanks is extended to the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District for enlisting the participation of various local property managers and business owners on K Street. Some 20 stakeholders in the District volunteered their time to meet with the design panel. They included local and federal government officials, property managers, business owners, and local urban design experts. The process allowed for the sharing of unique and valuable insights into potential scenarios for the K Street corridor. This cooperation was crucial to the future success of the urban design process envisioned by the K Street design panel.

The sponsors and panel also extend their thanks to the K Street Charrette partners, which included: the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the District of Columbia Office of Planning (DCOP), and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). In particular, the sponsors and panel would like to commend Dan Tangherlini, Director of the District Department of Transportation, for his leadership, encouragement, and vision to transform K Street into one of the world's great streets.

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#### Panel Interviewees

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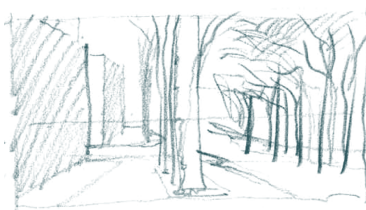
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