

DRAFT

MOUNT VERNON SQUARE DISTRICT
DESIGN PROJECT

NOVEMBER 2010

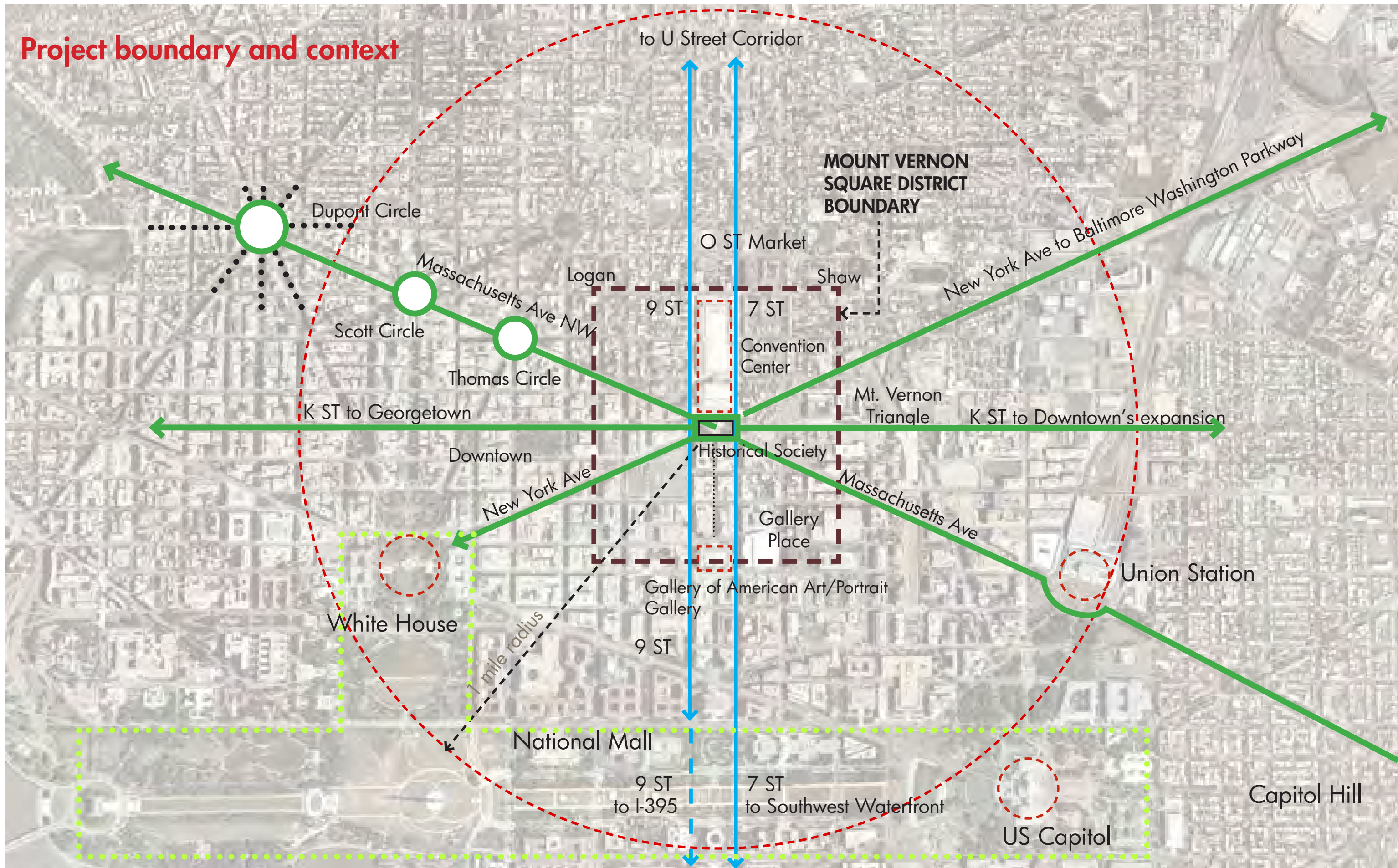




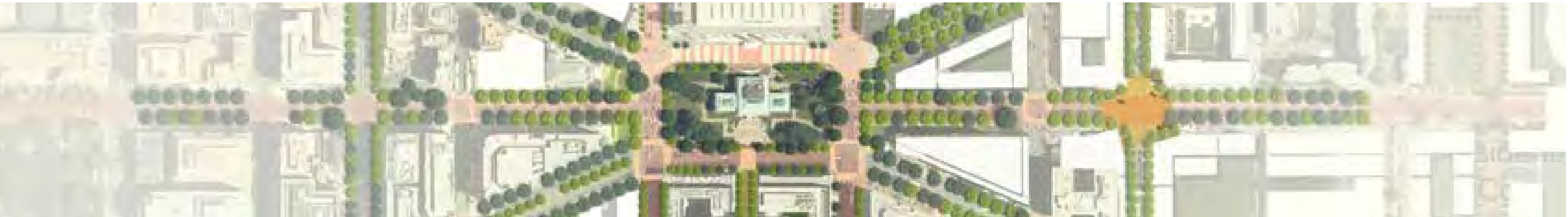
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	5
i. Introduction	
ii. Vision	6
ii. Strategic Approach	8
iii. Summary Timeline of Recommendations	12
2. Priority Projects	12
Priority Project 1: The Square	
Priority Project 2: 8th Street as flexible event space	
Priority Project 3: The Convention Center Lobby	
Priority Project 4: The Streetcar	
Priority Project 5: Zoning Regulations	
Priority Project 6: The Carnegie Library Building	
Priority Project 7: Public Space Stewardship	
Priority Project 8: 9th Street NW, North of the Square	
Priority Project 9: Sustainability	
Priority Project 10: Crosswalks	
3. Realizing the Vision	33
i. Dynamic Place: A Hub for Surrounding Neighborhoods	25
ii. Transportation Hub: 21st Century Crossroads	41
iii. Parks, Plazas and Streets: A Network of Public Places	63
iv. A Business Strategy for Coordinated Action	75
4. Appendix	

Project boundary and context



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

As Washington DC's downtown grows eastward along the K Street corridor, and the demand for in-town residential premises grows, Mount Vernon Square is becoming an increasingly important location. The square is at the nexus of changing transportation infrastructure, strong residential growth, and increasing demand for local-serving retail and high quality public spaces.

These changes, coupled with its proximity to such landmark buildings and districts as the Convention Center, the White House, the Portrait Gallery, the National Mall, the historic Shaw neighborhood, and Gallery Place/Chinatown make a compelling case for a revitalized Square and Carnegie Library building, recalling its history as a dynamic, integral part of the city.

Project Background

The Mount Vernon Square (MVS) District design project is a joint undertaking by the DC Office of Planning and the District Department of Transportation. The effort synthesizes several planning, public realm design, transportation and economic development initiatives within, and in the vicinity of, Mount Vernon Square District into a cohesive set of physical recommendations. The recommendations are organized in four categories: a center for MVS district; its transportation infrastructure; its open space network; and its economic potential.

The Center

Washington DC is a city of diverse neighborhoods, each with a distinct center of its own. Some of these centers, Dupont Circle for example, serve multiple neighborhoods -- Dupont, Logan, West End, and Adams Morgan. Like Dupont Circle, Mount Vernon Square has the potential to unify the various residential, commercial, and entertainment neighborhoods that surround it -- Shaw, Downtown, Mount Vernon Triangle, and Chinatown -- becoming the new keystone for the area.

The Carnegie Library building and Mount Vernon Square's grounds are instrumental in this transformation. Uniquely sited on axis with the convention center and the National Portrait Gallery, the library building and its grounds are essential assets that can provide high quality open space, facilitate intermodal transit activity, and become the next great place in a city of great places.

The Square's History

Mount Vernon Square has had, over time, many different uses and characters – a market place, recreational grounds, crossroads to the City, and a well-utilized public library. Today it lies somewhat disengaged from the surrounding city fabric, due to high traffic volumes around it, lackluster landscape character, and the relocation of the public library to its current location at 9th and G Streets NW. In addition, neighborhoods to the north and east are just beginning to recover from neglect left in the aftermath of the 1968 riots. Nearby highway infrastructure also contributed to the degradation of the square, which became focused on moving vehicular traffic quickly, with scant regard for the quality of adjacent pedestrian spaces. Today, Mount Vernon Square is poised to regain its historical significance as a city square engaged with the vibrant city neighborhoods that surround it.

The Square's Frame

The streets, buildings, federal reservations and undeveloped parcels that surround Mount Vernon Square are important in ensuring a vibrant center for the district. Similarly, the Walter Washington Convention Center and 8th Street to the south are key elements to the revitalization of the square. Eighth Street, a handsome street with little vehicular traffic, is ideal as a flexible space for events. The front lobby of the convention center facing the square provides a unique opportunity for a new, grand, active public space for Washingtonians, much like Grand Central station in New York or Union Station, just steps away on Massachusetts Avenue. In sum, a reinvigorated Mount Vernon Square, a re-programmed Carnegie Library building, active

ground floor uses in buildings fronting the Square, a flexible event space along 8th Street and a new living room in the convention center are excellent ingredients to make Mount Vernon Square a powerful new great place among its adjacent neighborhoods.

Transportation

MVS district is accessed by several transportation modes: pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles, the Circulator system, Metro bus and Metro rail. In addition, a new streetcar route on K Street is planned. The district's current infrastructure is not well suited to accommodate these diverse travel modes, leading to inefficiencies on bus routes along 7th street NW, vehicular congestion at the Square and on New York and Massachusetts Avenues, and frequent pedestrian-vehicular conflicts. In addition, growth along 9th street, a street that could function as a main street for Shaw, is inhibited due to constrained access.

This project envisions a future a transportation system that integrates and balances multiple transit modes. Transportation concepts for the square include a one-way loop, a partial one-way loop (7th and 9th Streets become two-way streets) and a two-way loop around Mount Vernon Square. Each concept accommodates essential mid-block pedestrian crossings at 8th Street, south of the Square and an equivalent one at the front door to the Convention Center, north of the Square.

The Square is envisioned as an intermodal transfer point for transit riders to switch transit modes between circulator, streetcar or metro bus or to change direction from east-west routes to north-south

routes. The design offers an improved pedestrian network across the square itself as well as a location for respite and recreation. Enhanced bus and bike facilities are accommodated on 7th Street, 9th Street, and Massachusetts Avenue NW with enhanced signage.

Open Space Network

Mount Vernon Square district's open space system includes a constellation of thirteen federal reservations, located at the district's corners and its center and the wide sidewalks of K Street NW, Massachusetts and New York Avenues. These reservations and rights-of-way are important legacies of the historic L'Enfant Plan, and over time left historic evidence of rich landscape character providing green space and amenities for the surrounding residents. The current unappealing character, the result of years of neglect, combined with the auto-dominated roadways east of the square has resulted in a public environment not conducive to pedestrian movements.

Recent and future new developments along Massachusetts Avenue, such as City Vista at K and 5th Streets, Center City on the old convention center site, the Gould Developments along Massachusetts Avenue east of the Square suggests that there is a great need for the public space amenities – parks, plazas, sidewalks - that are so vital to making successful residential neighborhoods. The bowtie parks at the corners of the district, now mostly green "leftovers", are particularly instrumental in augmenting the network of green space available to residents. This project provides recommendations for upgrades to the bowtie parks that build on their historic role as neighborhood amenities, meanwhile

also adapting them to become parts of the neighborhoods in which they reside.

Reservations 68 and 69 (the northwest pair of bowtie parks) are in better condition than the others and utilized by the growing residential population of the area. The southwest bowtie parks (reservations 173 and 174) are within the downtown area and frequented by office workers. Reservation 173 in particular is well used during lunch hours by office workers. Design elements such as additional trees and paved areas demarcated for performances and gatherings will enhance the park's vitality during the lunch hours and beyond. Across New York Avenue, Reservation 174 is an important part of the future City Center development by Hines/Archstone planned for the site of the old convention center.

Bowtie parks to the east are most in need of enhancements. The southeast parks (Reservations 72, 73, 74) are at the cusp of Chinatown and Mount Vernon Triangle and adjacent to several new developments with residents who will need park amenities. The northeast parks (Reservations 177, 178) are subject to similar demographic growth pressures as development occurs around them. Reservation 177 is currently a parking lot, while much of Reservation 178 is fenced off from public access. Between the two parks is New York Avenue, a major deterrent for pedestrians and to the integration of Shaw to the north with Mount Vernon Triangle to the south.

In sum, recommendations for the pairs of bowtie parks include new edge treatments such as fences and hedges, new pathways within the parks, enhanced crosswalks and sidewalks around the parks, lighting, public art and signage. The recommendations will provide future residents with valuable park spaces, will reinforce Mount Vernon Square district's identity and will unify it with the adjacent neighborhoods of Shaw, Logan, Mount Vernon Triangle, Downtown and Chinatown.



TRANSFORMING THE DISTRICT

1. A dynamic center that gives Mount Vernon Square District an identity

Transformative change will begin at the new District's Center - Mount Vernon Square, the Convention Center, 8th Street and the surrounding developments. The center will be a destination for surrounding residents, for conventioners, for visitors from the National Mall, Gallery Place/Chinatown and for office workers. The public realm here will give identity for a distinct new District.

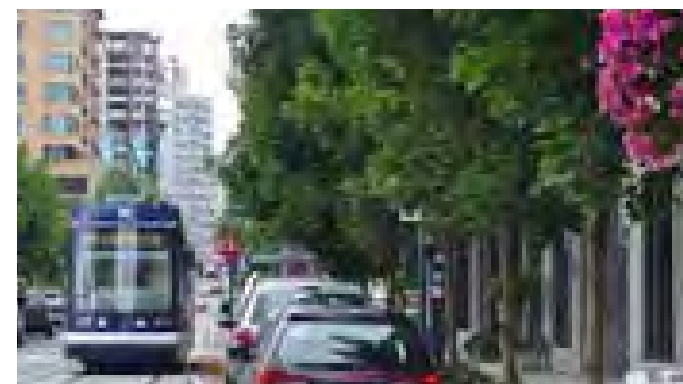


An attractive "green" center conducive for variety of activities

2. A transportation system that is responsive to local, rather than commuter needs

A new transportation plan will balance the needs of various modes, introduce new, sustainable transportation options and make public parks and plazas more accessible. The focus will be on integrating the various public transit options that traverse the District to offer convenient access to and from Mount Vernon Square.

Pedestrian-prioritized and bicycle-friendly environment

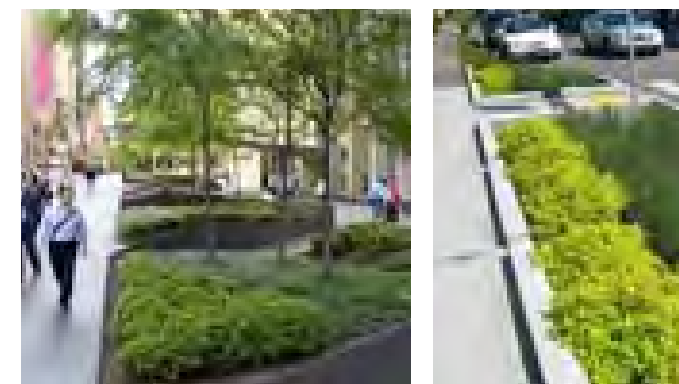
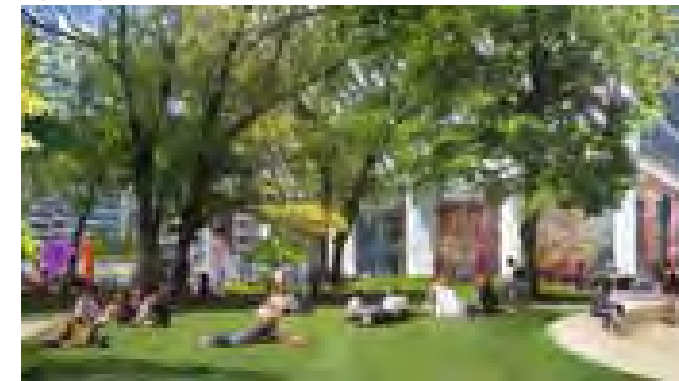


Rights-of-way where various transportation modes co-exist

3. A diverse system of green space that makes MVS district attractive for future residents and creates a framework for sustainable growth.

A cohesive plan for the District's Federal Reservations, plazas, Avenues and Streets will create public space amenities to attract new residents, serve existing residents and workers and that further Washington DC's agenda for a sustainable public realm, by "greening" the streets and integrating low impact development and storm water solutions in all public realm projects; encouraging high standards of sustainability from private sector projects through policy incentives such as tax credits, to include techniques such as green roofs, the use of solar energy.

Open spaces that are valuable to residents and visitors



Streets are retrofitted with shade trees and Low Impact Development features

4. A business strategy to fund and manage transformation

While long term trends for Mount Vernon Square District are positive, the immediate economic environment will remain a challenge in the short to medium term; as this situation changes, a District-wide management entity will be formed to coordinate private sector developments, harness public sector transportation and capital improvement funds and actively program and manage the District's open spaces.

An entity responsible for programing and revenue generation



A robust upkeep and maintenance program

The northwest bowtie parks - upgrades such as new benches, sidewalk repairs and landscape treatments will create an enhanced neighborhood asset.

9th Street NW - a major link to points north and south will accommodate quality retail and 21st century transportation facilities for bikes, pedestrians and vehicles; sidewalks along 1000 and 1100 blocks are expanded to allow convenient pedestrian movements and create spillout space for retail outlets.

A publicly accessible Convention Center, with programmed events and exhibitions in its headhouse, and active uses at its corners

The Carnegie Library building, its grounds and the Federal Reservations - A new center for Mount Vernon Square District, with active programming, reconfigured grounds, linkages to the Convention Center and 8th Street NW and building additions at the northeast and northwest corners

The southwest bowtie parks - a new downtown park that features space for small performances and enhanced landscape treatment, providing sense of enclosure, shade and buffer from New York Avenue

A 5-minute walk from the Center to neighborhood parks

The northeast bowtie parks - curb realignments, restriped crosswalks, possible relocation of parking lot and appropriate design of fences create a new neighborhood asset for Mount Vernon Triangle and Shaw

8th Street NW - a new public environment, with active programming and streetscape upgrades that make it a pleasing pedestrian environment; events become a revenue source for the city.

7th Street NW - a major link to points north and south will accommodate 21st century transportation facilities for buses, pedestrians and vehicles; its retail environment will be extended north of Mount Vernon Square.

The southeast bowtie parks - curb realignments, restriped crosswalks, hardpaved and softpaved areas, and appropriate design of fences along the edges create viable parks for Mount Vernon Triangle and Chinatown.

VISION

STRATEGIC APPROACH

1

Build on the recent success of Gallery Place/ Chinatown.

The Mount Vernon District is the logical next great neighborhood of the downtown and directly benefits from the revitalization of Chinatown and Gallery Place. Strategically, the extension of 7th and 9th Streets, both energetic “drivers” of much of the new downtown, though the new Mount Vernon District connects the success of that area to the Square and areas to the north in Shaw. The vision for the Square itself completes the entertainment/retail focus of Chinatown/Gallery Place with opportunities for larger, destination activities at the edges of the Square and re-proposing opportunities at the Carnegie Library and the head house of the Walter Washington Convention Center.



7th and H Street, in Gallery Place/ Chinatown

2

Leverage underutilized public assets within Mount Vernon Square District to generate revenue for the City.

Great public places provide value for the cities in which they reside. Mount Vernon Square provides a significant opportunity for the city to realize revenue via the use of the space of the Square itself and creative management of the Carnegie Library building. Revenue potential should be developed via managed programming related and complementary to existing uses, such as the Convention Center, the entertainment district at Gallery Place/Chinatown and new development planned for the area.

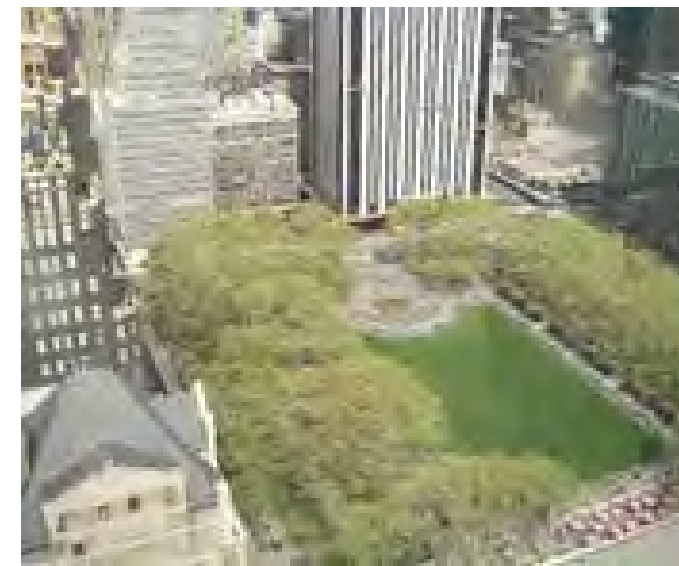


Bryant Park, Manhattan
The grounds are used as flexible event space that brings revenue.

3

Integrate public assets with adjacent private property, to maximize value for all.

The Mount Vernon Square District includes, in addition to significant public assets such as the Square, the Carnegie Library and the Bow-tie Parks, large sites for private redevelopment. The city’s vision for the district should assist private developers and property owners to envision how their assets can assume an important role in the revitalization from ground level uses, to architectural character and design.



Bryant Park, Manhattan
Since its makeover, properties adjacent to the park have benefitted immensely in value and have gained an open space resource.

4

Leverage future transportation assets – the streetcar – to help fund catalytic changes to the Center, and on Street Rights-of-way.

The promise of further transportation enhancements, such as the K Street streetcar at the Square brings with it the opportunity for significant improvements to the design of the Square itself, such as improvements to the streetscape and sidewalk system and better definition and clarity to surface vehicle circulation. Future transportation improvements should be embraced at the Square as essential and iconic elements of a great public place.



If used in an integrated way, the funds available for the Streetcar in Washington could also be used to re-configure Mount Vernon Square such that it is more accessible.

5

Implement a 21st century transportation system

Mount Vernon Square is located at the nexus of several important transportation assets, including the regular DC street grid, arterial streets such as New York and Massachusetts Avenues, and a stop on the Metro's Yellow and Green lines. The future success of the district is equally dependent upon continuing to enhance existing assets via multi-modal streets that include bike lanes and facilities, bus lanes for efficient surface transportation and provision for the eventual arrival of a streetcar system, enhancing east-west movement.



Paris
State-of-the art pedestrian and bike facilities augment motorized transit and cars; streets are truly multi-modal.

6

Integrate green technologies in public space and private properties

The Mount Vernon Square District has the opportunity to embrace green technologies and become a model for neighborhood identity for sustainable development. Incentives must be developed to encourage the implementation of such techniques as green roofs, solar energy and storm water harvesting and low-impact development practices. Many places exist in the District for the city to provide visible and energetic leadership, such as the use of LID's in the Square, streetscapes and Bow-tie parks and other public spaces. The vast territory of the roof of the Convention Center provides a significant opportunity for solar energy collection.



The wide rights-of-way in Mount Vernon Square District could provide significant "green" space that is an open space amenity and a way to incorporate Low Impact Development techniques in public space.

7

Business strategies

While the prospect of success for the Mount Vernon Square District is promising in the long term, today's economic climate presents significant challenges. To address these challenges will take a strong, viable business approach that streamlines decision making and leverages what scarce funds there are towards a common goal. To that end the formation of a business and management entity to oversee the District's transformation is a necessity; this entity may be modeled along the lines of several others in Washington - the Downtown DC BID, the NoMA BID, and Mt. Vernon Triangle CID. Key issues the business entity will address include –

- Management of publicly controlled assets,
- Funding mechanisms,
- Branding and marketing strategies,
- Leasing strategies.



A vehicle to coordinate the significant private and public investment that is in the pipeline in Mount Vernon Square District. Examples include the Bryant Park District in Manhattan (above).

8

Phased implementation

Immediate (0 to 3 years) –
Implement "crises-fixes" on sidewalks, enhance all crosswalks, implement public space projects that are not contingent on private sector involvement; obtain approvals as necessary; establish management entity for MVS District.

Short term (3 to 5 years) –
Complete transportation analyses; encourage private sector development as economic recovery takes shape; implement changes to Mount Vernon Square in coordination with Streetcar alignment.

Long term (Over 5 years) –
Projects that are more capital-intensive or that require additional approvals, design development, private sector participation.

TIMELINE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	IMMEDIATE (1 TO 3 YEARS)	SHORT TERM (3 TO 5 YEARS)	LONG TERM (OVER 5 YEARS)
<i>Recommendations to create a cohesive system of Parks, Streets and Open Spaces</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete maintenance agreements with the National Park Service (NPS) for Reservation Numbers 68, 69,72,73,74,173,177 and 178. • Complete all coordination and approvals with DDOT/UFA for palette of materials for sidewalks and street trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement changes to Bowtie Parks and adjoining sidewalks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete transfer of jurisdiction over Bowtie Parks to the District of Columbia.
<i>Recommendations for Mount Vernon Square and the Carnegie Library Building - A Dynamic, Active Center</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement inexpensive, temporary upgrades to Mount Vernon Square’s grounds that will encourage visitors and neighboring residents to use the grounds and unify the north edge of the Square with the Convention Center across Mount Vernon Place NW. Coordinate with stakeholders and government agencies to establish management entity for Mount Vernon Square’s grounds and the Carnegie Library Building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete design drawings for the Square that enhance pedestrian connectivity and safety through the Square, provide opportunities for events and increase overall beautification. • Re-use the Carnegie building’s west wing as a restaurant linked to outdoor spaces along the north edge of the Square. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement permanent additions to the Carnegie Library Building to enhance the amount of usable space and programmatic diversity within the building. • Implement changes to Square, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Expand the Square outwards, after re-allocation of lanes on 7th, 9th, K Streets NW and Mount Vernon Place NW to accommodate the K Street streetcar alignment. ◦ Install protective elements around the Square - fences, trees - and implement other changes to the Square’s grounds including lighting, seating, and terraces for events. ◦ Re-align paths within the Square
<i>Recommendations for a 21st Century Transportation System</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement signalization phasing and timing changes, curbside management and lane reconfiguration on 7th and 9th Streets NW to address immediate pedestrian and traffic issues related to queuing distances, potential pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, double parking and tour bus parking. • Re-stripe crosswalks around Mount Vernon Square and the Bowtie parks to enhance pedestrian access to parks and open spaces. • Examine way-finding signage improvements approaching and around the Square (signage and/or pavement markings). • Add tree nodes on 10th Street NW to improve pedestrian conditions. • Facilitate better transit on 7th Street with transit signal priority, increased bus lane enforcement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all transportation analyses for Mount Vernon Square District. • Study impacts and install mid-block crossings at the intersections of 8th Street NW with K Street NW and Mount Vernon Place NW (in front of the Convention Center) and bulb-outs at the intersection of 8th and I Streets NW. • Enhance transit and bike facilities by marking lanes on pavement with special patterns; add a protected cycle track to the 9th Street corridor using space from eliminating the bus-bike lane. • Examine need for bike lanes on 7th Street with future lanes on 6th and 9th Streets. • Coordinate additional studies with Streetcar planning work, ensuring that recommendations from this plan are incorporated into NEPA work and the Alternatives Analysis. • These studies will be dependent on future Streetcar plans and environmental analyses. Studies should be sure to cover topics that include - analyzing the split streetcar lines around the square to link both sides of K Street, analyzing a 1-way traffic loop configuration, analyzing 7th and 9th as a one-way pair; timing of this study will be contingent on timing and funding of the streetcar segment. 	
<i>A Business Strategy for Coordinated Economic Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a management entity to shepherd the redevelopment process for Mount Vernon Square District and coordinate the activities of real estate development projects in Mount Vernon Square. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with DDOT, other government agencies and work closely with consultants to develop implementation-oriented projects for Mount Vernon Square District. • Complete a branding and marketing plan for Mount Vernon Square District and re-position Mount Vernon Square and the Carnegie Library Building. Design and deploy distinct public realm branding elements for Mount Vernon Square District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create additional zoning/ other incentives, based on short-term performance of retail and other commercial properties.

2. PRIORITY PROJECTS



The following 10 projects are key to the transformation of Mount Vernon Square district into a vibrant, economically successful, sustainable district.

PRIORITY PROJECT 1

THE SQUARE

Program and design Mount Vernon Square and the Carnegie Library Building to become a dynamic place that includes public park functions, cultural uses and events space, restaurant/café/vending, visitor and other destination-type uses; address design deficiencies of paths, edges and pedestrian amenities within the Square.

The Problem

Mount Vernon Square, although one of the largest spaces of the historic L'Enfant Plan, today asserts little influence as a place for formal or informal activities. Few of the uses at the edges of the space support activities that go on within the square and the cultural uses that do occur happen without a regular schedule or program of activities. Public space deficiencies, such as unclear cross-walks, unconnected or undirected paths within the square and a building designed to focus inward, not outward, contribute to a place that is under-utilized and uncoordinated.

The Future

Mount Vernon Square and the Carnegie Library building offer a unique opportunity to create a dynamic and exciting "place". All of the constituent elements of the square: the buildings at edges and the center, the supporting landscape and pedestrian environment and the attendant activities of the square proper are to be designed in a coordinated scheme that enhances the daily public activity of the square as well as an ongoing series of public events and related uses. The following are elements of a future Square:

1. A public park design that facilitates the ease of pedestrian movement to activities in Square and through the Square to the WWCC, retail locations on 7th and 9th Streets and the revitalized 8th Street. The new design features a path system that recognizes the front door of the convention center, a *parterre* (a raised outdoor terrace) accessed from the park and the Carnegie library building, new mid-block crossings at the north and south sides of the Square, an improved cross walk system that gives clear guidance to movement through and around the Square, and event places within the park.
2. Landscape design and maintenance programs that support good public space design, such as defining the edges of the Square with hedges or small fences to shield the pedestrian environment from surrounding traffic, climbing up the trees in the Square to avoid the current "overgrown" appearance, and a planting scheme that supports positive public surveillance yet yields a sense of place and ownership by the community.
3. The Square supports cultural uses associated with the Conve cing the WWCC in the new plaza, along the edges of the Square along 9th, 7th and the southern edge of the Square, and in the front lobby of the WWCC. Visitor activities are located within the Carnegie Library building and are supported by the activities of the square.
5. Enhance the spatial openness of the square by trimming lower hanging branches of tree in the square.



Above, right: Mount Vernon Square today

Below, right: The square with reconfigured pathways, landscape treatment and midblock crosswalks to connect to 8th Street NW and the Convention Center.

THE SQUARE



Paved outdoor areas



The parterre



Glassy Pavilions



Inner gardens



Inner pathways



Outer gardens



The transformation of the Square enhances the civic presence of the Carnegie building and its grounds, and offer a vibrant destination - a true social and ecological center for MVS district.

PRIORITY PROJECT 2

8TH STREET AS FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE

Develop the former 8th Street right-of-way between I and K Streets as a flexible events space and restore pedestrian crossings between 8th Street and the Square and between the Carnegie Building and the main entrance of the Convention Center.

The Problem

Eighth Street is ideally located to become an important part of the revitalization of Mount Vernon Square yet currently it provides little or no enhancement to the public vitality of the place. It possesses significant resources, such as a short, pedestrian only area just south of the Square, and many handsome recent and historic facades. In addition, the street is terminated in the majestic portico of the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Future

Eighth Street provides a significant key to the revitalization of the Square and is well positioned to be one of the first places in the area to under go a positive transformation. The section of Eighth Street directly to the south of MVS can immediately be used as a place for flexible events and concerts, and be further enhanced by coordinated activities and design improvements with the adjacent Renaissance Hotel and the Convention Center.

Design features to be included are:

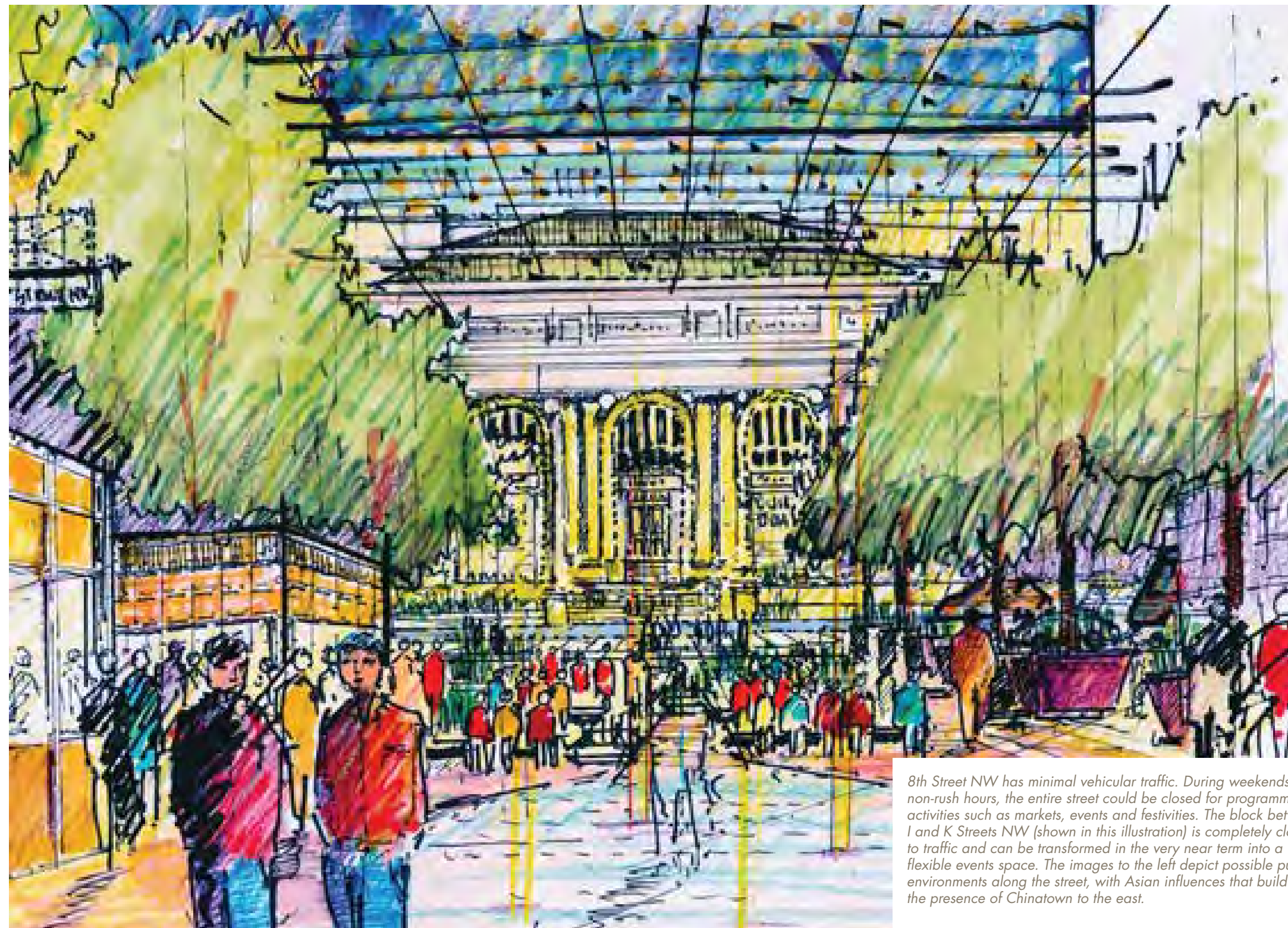
Overhead lighting, a sun shade stretching across the street, and a location for a stage to hold events. Further down the street, places for events associated with conventions in the area could be imagined, such as an outdoor book fare or evening fashion show.

To enhance the inclusion of Eighth Street into the Mount Vernon Square District, it is essential to insert a mid-block crossing at the south side of the Square so that activities and venues on Eighth can be directly connected to the Square and eventually the WWCC. A corresponding mid-block crosswalk on the north side from the north façade of the Carnegie Library to the WWCC permits a direct connection via a redesigned pathway system in the Square from north to south.

Further projects include an improved streetscape to the south, enhanced way-finding elements and a public art strategy (coordinated with the DCCAH) and a possible use of the museum portico as a backdrop for theatrical productions.



8TH STREET AS FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE



8th Street NW has minimal vehicular traffic. During weekends and non-rush hours, the entire street could be closed for programmed activities such as markets, events and festivities. The block between I and K Streets NW (shown in this illustration) is completely closed to traffic and can be transformed in the very near term into a flexible events space. The images to the left depict possible public environments along the street, with Asian influences that build on the presence of Chinatown to the east.

PRIORITY PROJECT 3

CONVENTION CENTER

Transform the front hall of the Convention Center to a truly public place. Analyze ways to accomplish this through the development of a restaurant, café or other retail function and by creating a mini-Smithsonian or other visitor functions.

The Problem

The Convention Center is a major attraction for the city of Washington, DC yet, although the Center is a design success for convention activities, its role as quality “place” for activities that engage and enhance the public environment of the Square and the larger district is minimal. In particular, the south facing façade along the northern edge of the Square provides little other than a location for entry and taxicabs.

The Future

Design changes to the way in which the Walter Washington Convention Center engages the Square can establish the Center as a less internally focused institution, and helping to establish a unique sense of place with activities that bring benefits to visitors and residents alike.

Projects to advance this transformation include:

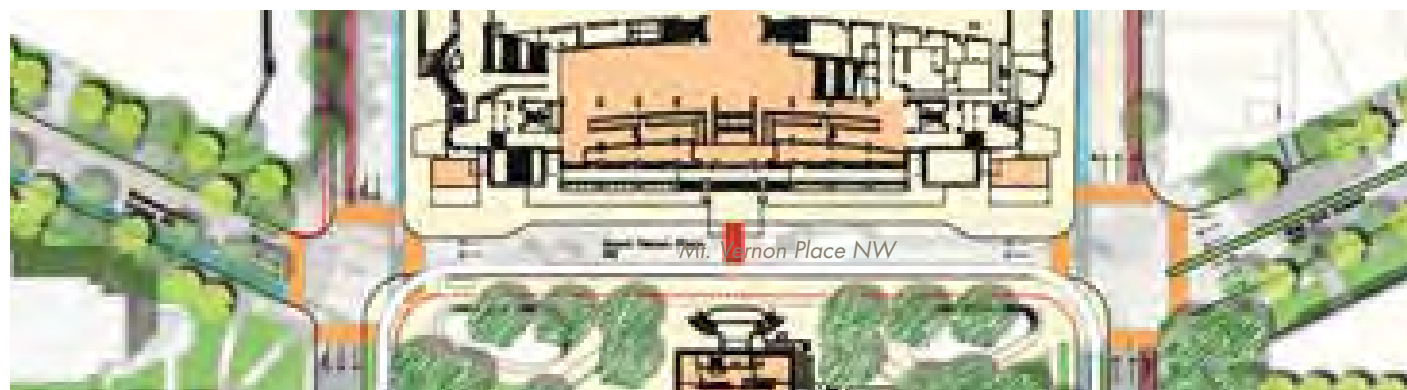
1. A high quality restaurant and/or café with exterior advertising on the southern exterior façade of the Convention Center located in the southern lobby of the center and open to the general public.
2. Exterior table service for a restaurant and/or café in the corner sidewalk areas at 7th and 9th Streets where they meet the Square.
3. The transformation of the large “headhouse” lobby of the Convention Center to a vibrant “public room” like the main hall at Union Station, with the inclusion of uniquely DC features, such as small exhibits from the Smithsonian and thematic displays connected to the Visitors Center located at the Square across the street.



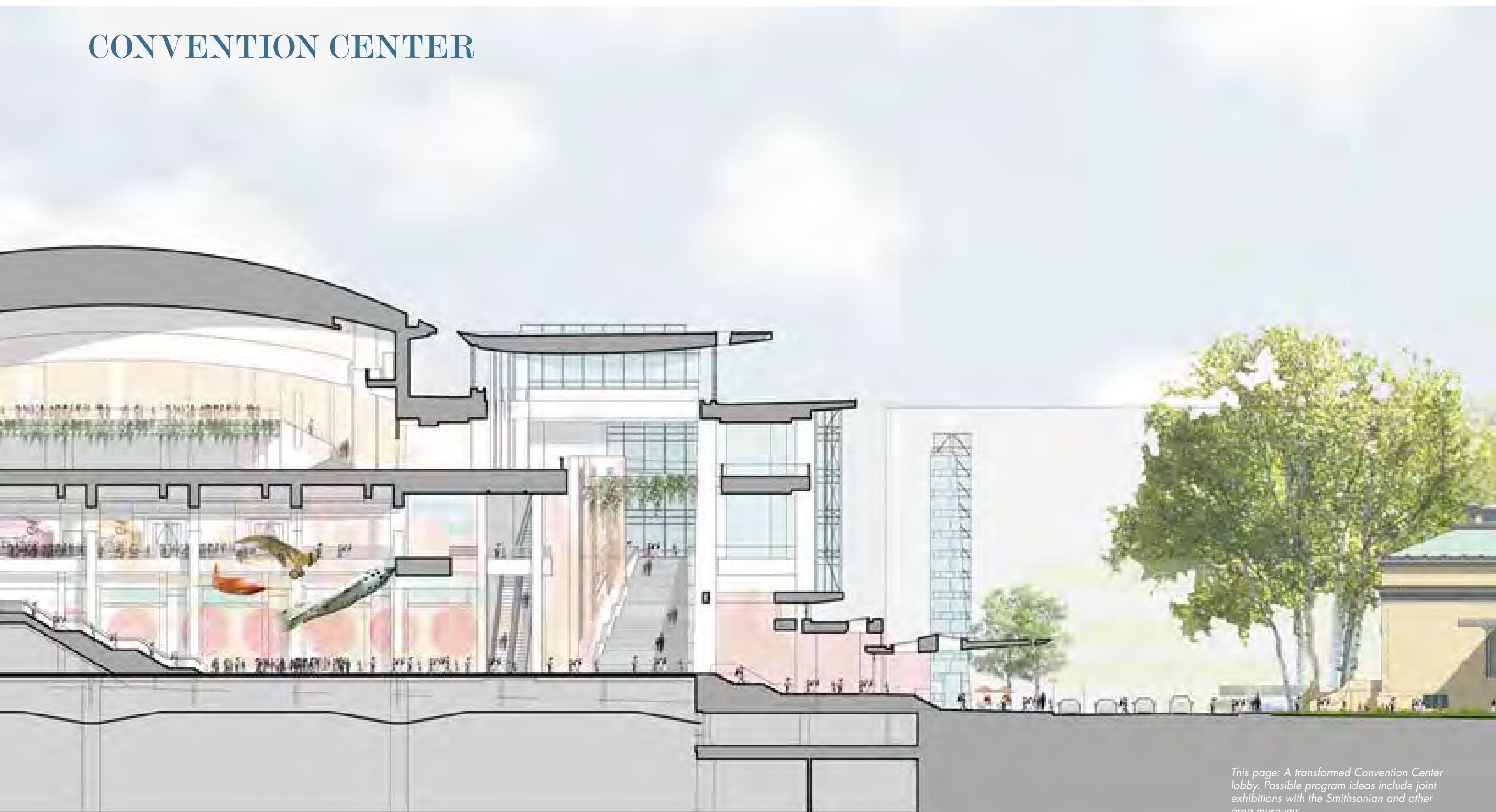
Left and below: Additions to the corners of the Convention Center will bring active uses to Mount Vernon Place. The corner additions will reinforce the pavilions at the northwest and northeast corners of Mount Vernon Square.



Below: A transformed Convention Center lobby. The inward-focussed lobby of the Convention Center could be transformed into a ‘living room’ for the city, with active programming, community forums and exhibitions.



CONVENTION CENTER



This page: A transformed Convention Center lobby. Possible program ideas include joint exhibitions with the Smithsonian and other area museums.

PRIORITY PROJECT 4

THE STREETCAR

Build upon the streetcar project, capitalizing on the alternatives analysis and other studies as a means to showcase transit and enhance place-making. Major decisions about the Square and circulation around it --- whether on foot, bicycle, in transit or a motor vehicle --- will be influenced by the generation of additional pedestrian traffic associated with the streetcar. The streetcar project and the K Street transit way project are likely to necessitate implementation of the longer term traffic circulation changes around the Square. Hence, major physical infrastructure investment in the Square itself will most likely take place at that time.

The Problem

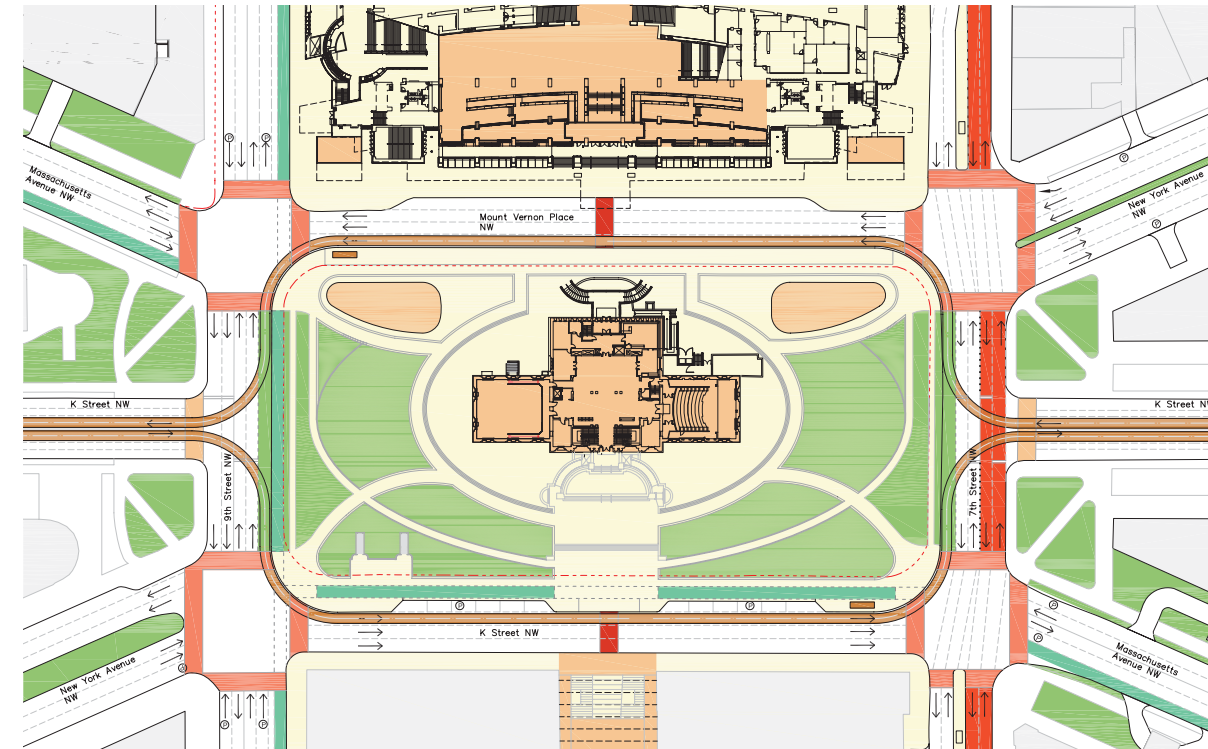
The arrival of the streetcar provides an additional opportunity for the transformation of the identity of the Square and to bring additional uses and visitors to the cultural, entertainment and retail activities in the district. Although no alignment has yet been determined for the streetcar, the sequence of projects planned to transform the Square must not preclude adaptation to the streetcar needs for space and character. In addition, alignment options must be reviewed with respect to enhancing the activity in and around the Square and supporting venues that either currently exist or planning for the future.

The Future

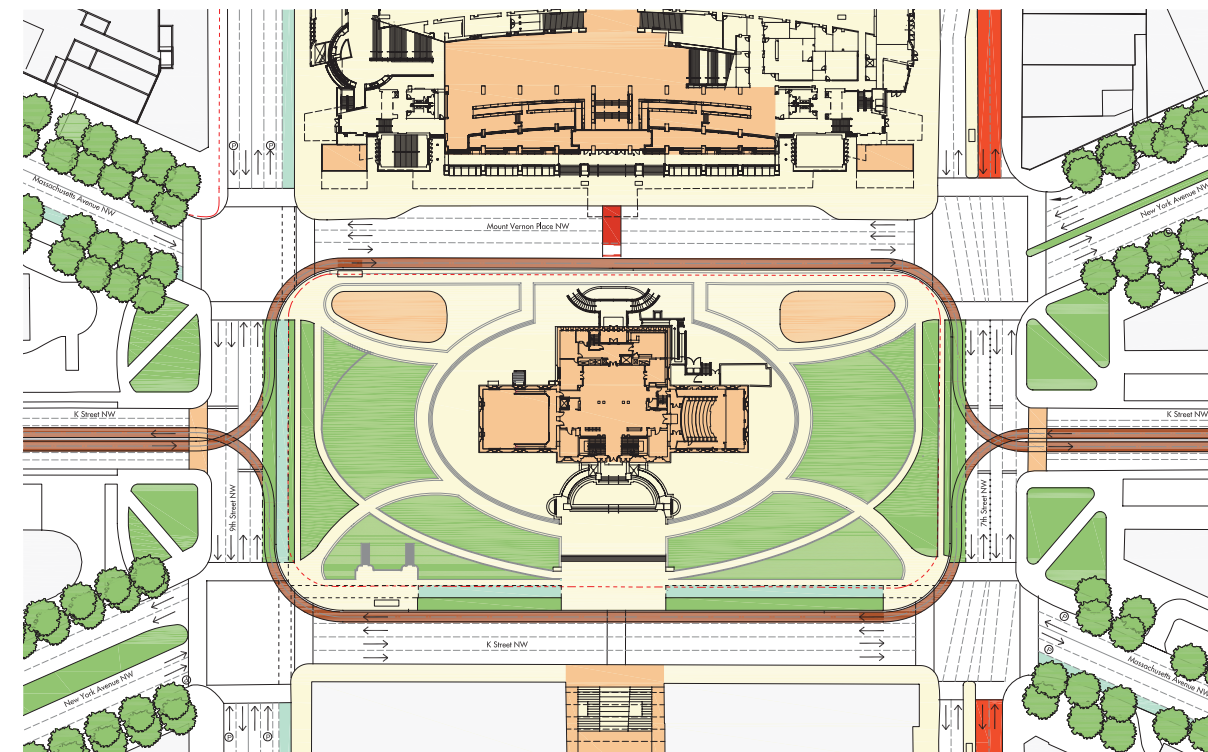
The transformation of the Square includes transit at the core of the vision.

The following principles apply:

1. Transit stops are located to enhance emerging patterns of pedestrian access and activity on the Square.
2. Eastbound and westbound stops are located to the south and north, respectively, of the Square and are designed to serve enhanced access and visibility of the Square activities, Eighth Street and the Convention Center.
3. The inclusion of transit in the revitalized Square is the main opportunity to visit the amount of cartway needed for surface transportation and make any adjustments necessary, such as widened sidewalks and street plantings.
4. Infrastructure changes to accommodate transit are developed in accordance with design guidelines for the revitalized Square and environs.



Left: Streetcar track alignment alternative 1. This alignment alternative allows one-way circulation north and south of the Square on Mount Vernon Place NW and K Street NW. Circulation on 7th and 9th Streets NW is flexible - either two-way or a one-way configuration. Final decisions regarding one-way or two-way flows will be made after detailed analyses is conducted.



Left: Streetcar track alignment alternative 2. This alignment alternative allows two-way circulation on Mount Vernon Place NW, K Street NW, 7th and 9th Streets NW. The streetcar runs in a 'cross-over' fashion -

1. Eastbound, the streetcar makes a left turn from K Street NW west of the square and a right turn on to Mount Vernon Place NW.

2. In the westbound direction, the streetcar makes a left turn from K Street NW east of the square and a right turn onto K Street south of the square.



- Streetcar tracks
- Dedicated bus lane
- Cycle track
- Enhanced pedestrian crosswalks

Preparation for the DC Streetcar

The team developed several different alternatives for the streetcar along K Street on the east and west sides of the Square. The team discussed pros and cons of several aspects, such as:

- Track alignment;
- Stop Placement;
- Signal timing;
- Coordination with placemaking on the Square and along 8th Street;
- Impacts on Traffic and several scenarios to change the traffic pattern;
- Impacts on pedestrian crossings, including mid-block crosswalks;
- Addressing bicycle circulation;
- Parking.

Before any decisions can be made, the DC Streetcar must conduct appropriate NEPA reviews, which are scheduled for 2011. The information gathered in this study will be used as groundwork for the Streetcar NEPA process.



PRIORITY PROJECT 5

ZONING REGULATIONS

Enact zoning to ensure active-street uses in buildings framing the Square.

The Problem

Currently no regulatory measures exist to promote the development of a world-class public place and destination for the city.

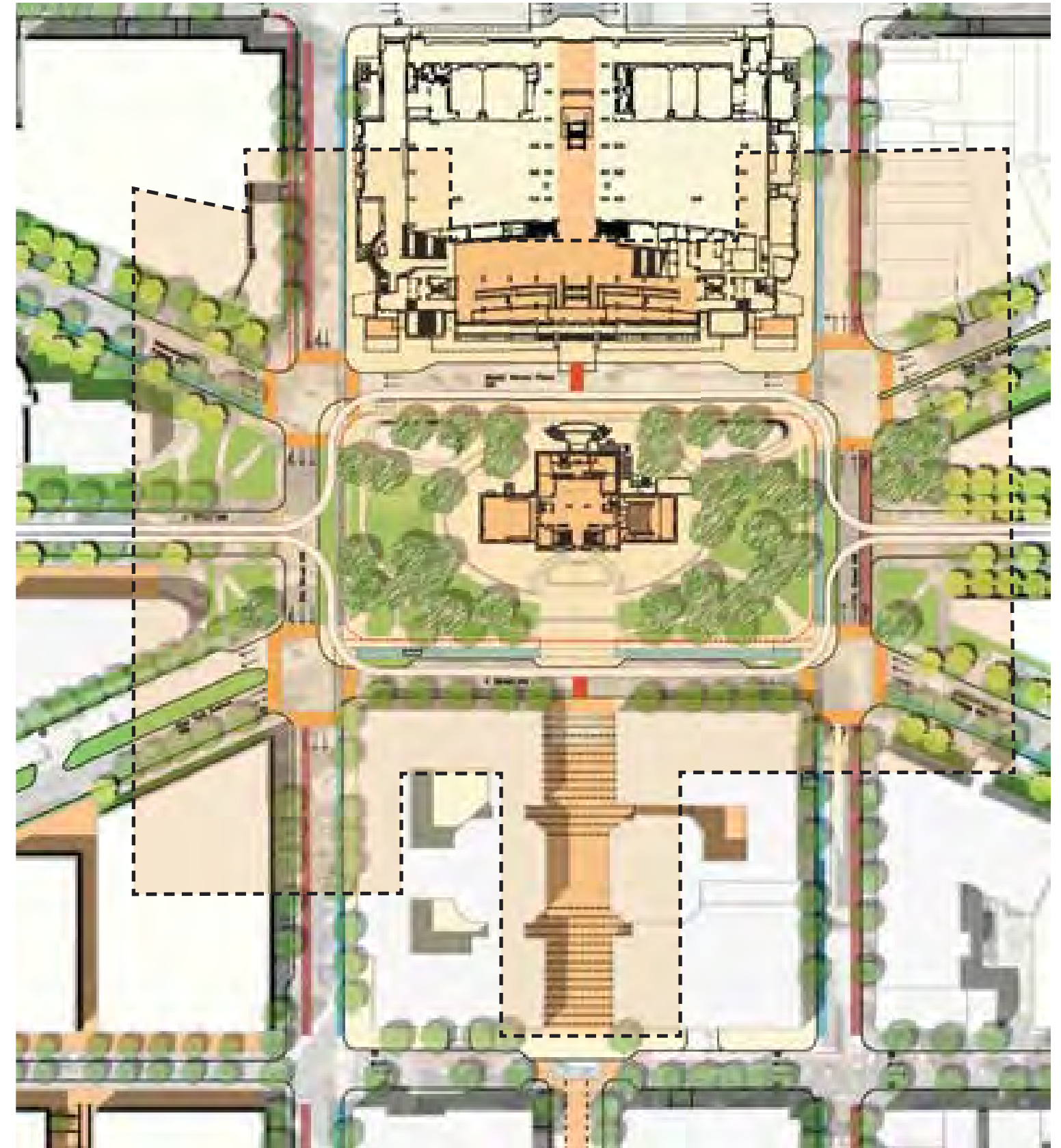
The Future

Zoning measures are enacted to require the following:

1. Ground floor space that faces the Square is required to host restaurant and/or food uses.
2. Incentives are developed to promote the possibility of outdoor dining along K, 7th, 9th, the southern edge of the Square and at the intersections leading into the Square at Massachusetts and New York Avenues.
3. Zoning is developed to prohibit the placement of service or garage entries directly facing onto the Square and to support main entries into ground floor destination and restaurant uses are located facing the Square.

Zoning regulations should be developed requiring active ground floor uses, transparent facades, front doors and lobbies and help activate the frame (sidewalks and building frontages) of Mount Vernon Square.

Right: Zoning overlay district shown in dotted lines. Regulations should require active ground floor uses, transparent facades and front doors to retail establishments, office lobbies and other uses.





PRIORITY PROJECT 6

THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILDING

Expand the opportunities of the Carnegie Library Building, via a public space management and development partnership that includes the District government, the Historical Society of Washington DC, the Downtown BID, the Mount Vernon Triangle CID, the Washington Convention Center and Sports Authority, and other necessary entities. Promote creative uses and development potential that turn the building and surrounding grounds into a valuable asset for the city.

The Problem

The Carnegie Library Building is a handsome historic building and lends its unique character to the sense of the place of the Square. However, the building was designed as an internally focused public building with one primary entry and is raised a significant amount above the main level of the Square. Only the south facing side of the building retains a public scale and sense of connection to the exterior although the building does possess interior spaces of significant dimension and quality that are currently used for public and private events.

Current programming for the building does not generate a consistent level of public activity and those activities are only moderately coordinated with surrounding entities, such as the Convention Center and local convention hotels.

A Management Entity:

The management entity for the overall district is the best advocate for the future use of the Carnegie Library Building with the building assisting in the future success of the Historical Society, the Convention Center and other city-wide resources and institutions. The management entity is charged with the following for the Carnegie Library building itself:

1. The management of the programming and scheduling of the Carnegie Library to promote public access and activities at the building.
2. To design and support the interaction of activities that occur both in and outside of the library on the grounds of the Square.

New program in the west wing of the Carnegie Library building - possible uses include a destination restaurant.

Expand access to the central atrium of the Carnegie building through additional visitor related functions; expand revenue generating potential of the atrium by more effective event management and programming.

A new parterre addition expands the amount of usable fair-weather space of the building.



Add pavilions with active program - potentially food and vending - to the corners of the Square to create a stronger draw for the building.

Make pathways more inviting, so pedestrians are encouraged to walk through Mount Vernon Square, thereby increasing the visibility and exposure of the building's program.

Reinforce the image of the building by adding paths and other landscape elements that are harmonious and do not detract from the historic frontage of the building.

Make pedestrian access to the building convenient by adding a midblock crossing at 8th and K Streets NW.

PRIORITY PROJECT 7

PUBLIC SPACE STEWARDSHIP

Form a financing and management entity for the Square and all the parks in the Mount Vernon Square District, including those controlled by the National Park Service and those controlled by the District, to improve them as neighborhood amenities with high quality design, adequate funding, maintenance, and programming. Transfer all bow-tie parks and the open space of MVS to the District.

The Problem

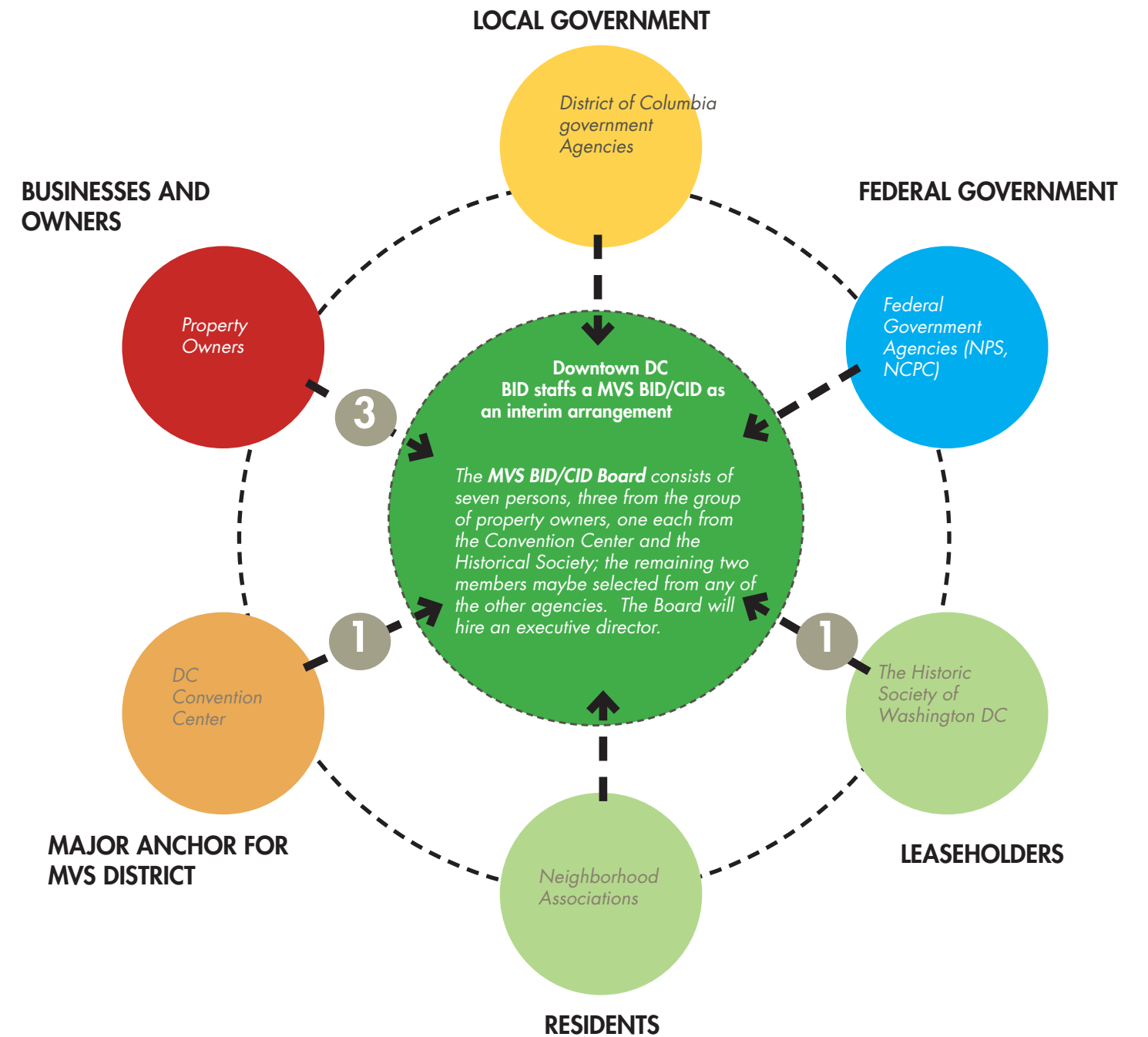
Public spaces in the district currently fall under several different management entities: the National Park Service, the District and the Convention Center Authority. In addition, several private organizations control space, such as the Renaissance Hotel which controls the pedestrian street south of the Square at Eighth Street.

The National Park Service controls the majority of the bow-tie parks along New York and Massachusetts Avenues and generally provides service to those areas such as landscape maintenance and grass cutting. As such, the open spaces in the MVS district have suffered from a lack of unity and design and although the places themselves are large in size, they are not inviting and have in most cases little to offer to the public realm.

The Future

A management entity for the district and the Square provides for a coordinated point of contact for design, programming and maintenance such that a unified vision can be created and sustained. Such an entity would derive its powers from private property owners, institutions, the city, and the National Park Service and be charged with the following:

1. Guide the implementation of the redesigned public space of the Square and the Bow-tie parks.
2. Work with property owners of yet-to-be developed sites to assume that individual property visions and the overall vision for the district are compatible.
3. Coordinate the scheduling of public activities in public buildings and public spaces.
4. Market the district and the Square as a unique place for visitors, businesses and residents.
5. Set design standards that will assure a high quality and identifiable "place" within the city fabric.



Above: Graphic depiction of a potential Mount Vernon Square Business Improvement District OR Community Improvement District, with representation from key stakeholders.

PRIORITY PROJECT 8

9TH STREET NORTH OF THE SQUARE

Re-imagine 9th Street north of the Square into a street that supports neighborhood retail, by widening the sidewalk on the west side of the street and by increasing the visibility and identity of the retail located within the Convention Center on the east side of the street.

The Problem

A unique opportunity along 9th Street exists to create a vibrant neighborhood retail area, which would serve in contrast to destination oriented retail located around the Square and along 7th Street to the southeast. Currently, narrow sidewalks define the western side north of the Square and although the convention center does contain retail storefronts along its western side, the large width of the street combined with little activity on the western side of Ninth Street leaves the area somewhat lacking.

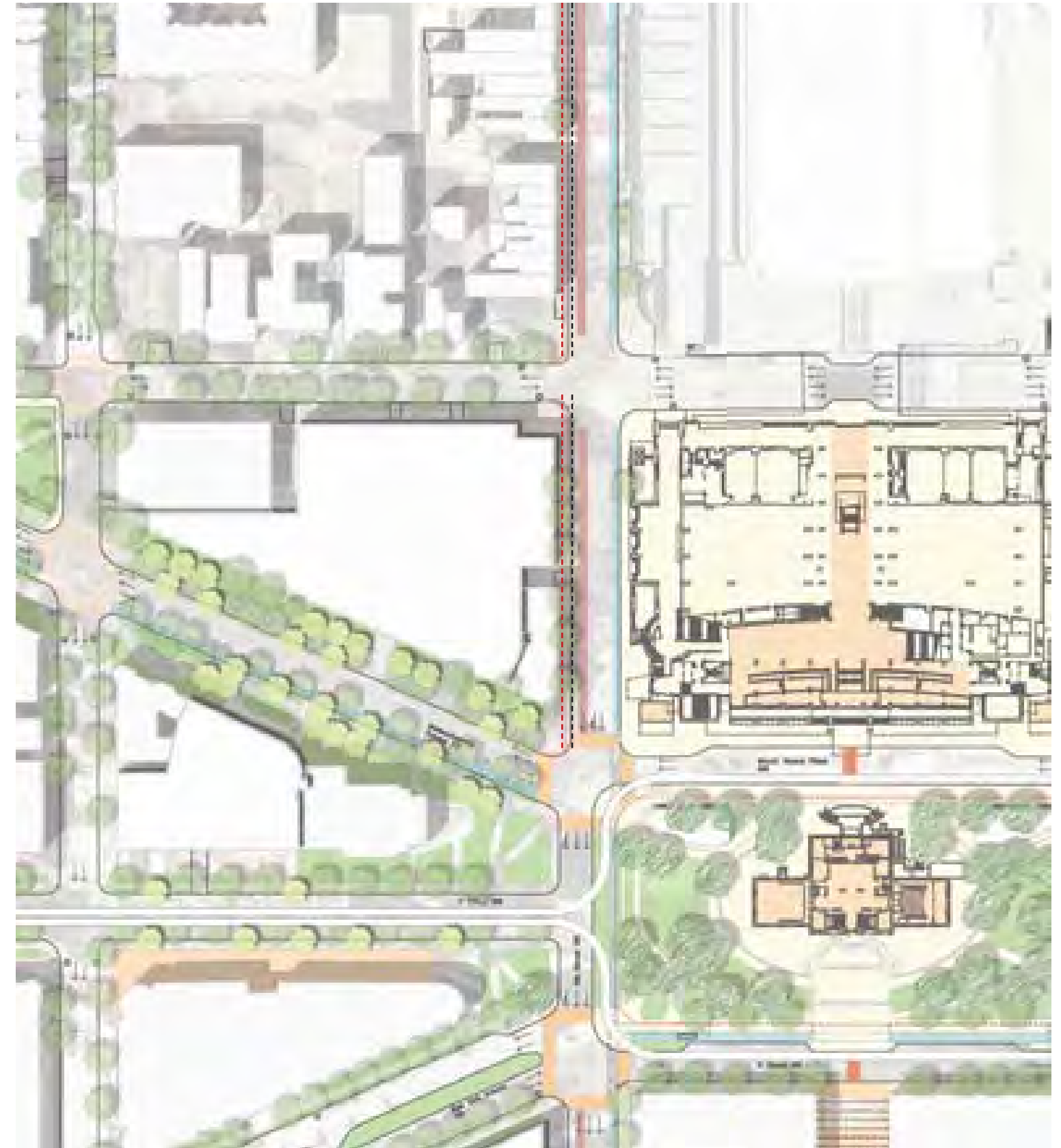
The Future

Provides for complementary neighborhood serving retail along Ninth Street with destination retail at the Square and further south. Along Ninth Street the following physical changes are necessary:

1. Ninth Street must be narrowed on the western side north of the Square to permit the sidewalk to be narrowed for retail activity.
2. Retail storefronts along the western elevation of the Convention Center facing Ninth Street should be redesigned to allow greater shading, more recognizable branding and signage and improved access.
3. Ground level uses of the new convention center hotel planned for the corner of Ninth and Massachusetts Avenue should be coordinated to support the transition from destination retail activities on the Square to retail that serves neighborhood needs.

--- Existing curb impedes pedestrian movements.

--- Relocated curb line gives additional space for sidewalk on west side of 9th Street NW.



This page: A transformed 9th Street NW, looking north - an expanded sidewalk offers pedestrians more room to maneuver, businesses more space for display and spill out and additional space for landscape treatment.



PRIORITY PROJECT 9

MOVEMENT AROUND AND THROUGH THE SQUARE

Make a legible system of movements for all modes around the Square, and for pedestrians moving through the Square; the system should alleviate current traffic and transportation issues while also accommodating future changes (such as the streetcar).

The Problem

Today, movement around the Square for all modes - pedestrians, cars, bikes and buses - lacks legibility. During the peak hours, cars are often stuck in long queues which impact pedestrian crossings and bus operations.

From a place making perspective, the wide roadways to the north and south of the Square impede a synergistic relationship between Mount Vernon Square, the Convention Center, and 8th Street. Learning from similar examples (Stanton Square, Lincoln Park, Dupont Circle) in the city with one-way traffic circulation, the movements of traffic around the square must be simplified. One way circulation also requires fewer lanes and makes pedestrian crossings safer.

The Future

Mount Vernon Square will potentially be surrounded by one-way or partial one-way traffic that will make pedestrian movements across K Street NW south of the square and Mount Vernon Square more convenient. A new streetcar alignment will be accommodated, with stops on the square.



Potential section through Mount Vernon Place NW. One-way circulation, reduced roadway width and a midblock crosswalk make pedestrian crossings easier. An expanded sidewalk allows additional room for pedestrians on the square.



Potential section through K Street NW south of Mount Vernon Square. One-way circulation, reduced roadway width and midblock crosswalks make pedestrian crossings easier. An expanded sidewalk allows additional room for pedestrians, bike movements.

Three transportation concepts will be forwarded for further analysis before a final concept is chosen.



A COMPLETE ONE-WAY LOOP FOR MOUNT VERNON SQUARE, 7TH AND 9TH STREETS NW

LEGEND

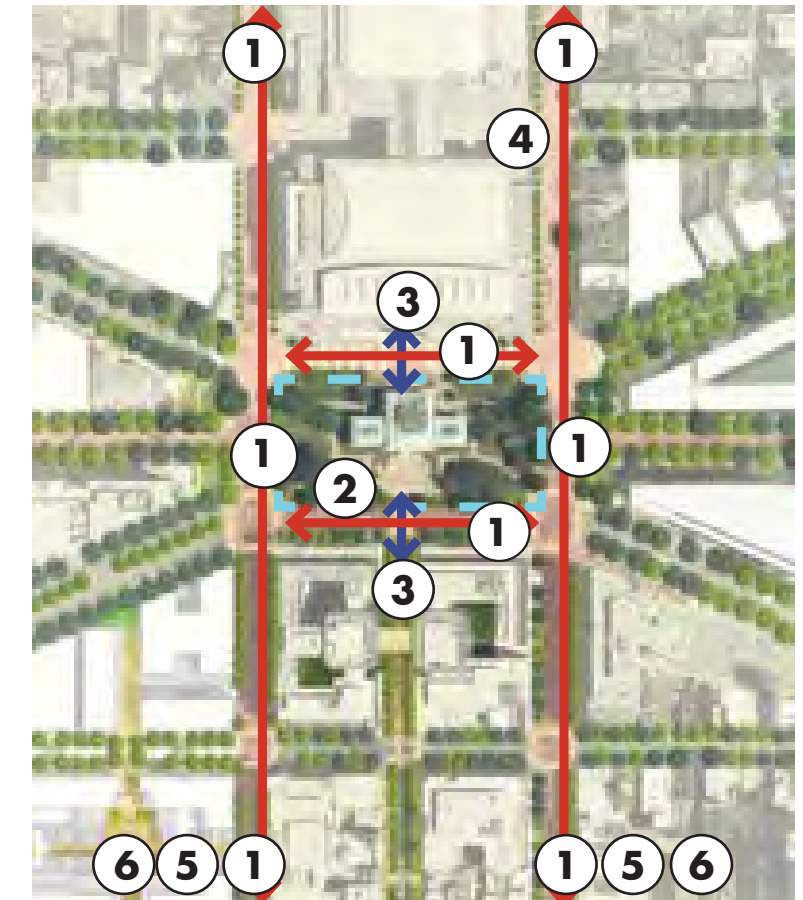
1. One-way circulation around Mount Vernon Square
2. Widened sidewalks
3. Mid-block crosswalk
4. One-way pair circulation (7th and 9th Street, south of the Square)
5. Traffic calming
6. Two-way cycle tracks
7. Curbside bus-only lanes
8. Curbside parking
9. One-way circulation (7th and 9th Streets NW, north of the Square)



A PARTIAL ONE-WAY LOOP FOR MOUNT VERNON SQUARE, 7TH AND 9TH STREETS NW

LEGEND




1. One-way circulation
2. Widened sidewalks
3. Mid-block crosswalk
4. Traffic calming
5. Two-way circulation
6. Bus lanes on 7th Street/bike lanes on 9th Street
7. Rush hour restricted parking on 9th Street; parking on 7th Street limited at locations due to bus stop median.
8. Two-way circulation



A TWO-WAY LOOP FOR MOUNT VERNON SQUARE, 7TH AND 9TH STREETS NW

LEGEND

1. Two-way circulation
2. Widened sidewalks
3. Mid-block crosswalk
4. Traffic calming
5. Bus lanes on 7th Street/bike lanes on 9th Street
6. Rush hour restricted parking on 9th Street; parking on 7th Street limited at locations due to bus stop median.

-  An expanded square
-  7th, 9th K Streets NW and Mount Vernon Place NW (one-way circulation)
-  Mid-block crosswalk

PRIORITY PROJECT 10

CROSSWALKS

Paint pedestrian crosswalks throughout the entire Mount Vernon Square District and ensure that signal timing is optimized for a safe pedestrian crossing at each location; use pedestrian signage and crosswalk pattern that are clearly visible to pedestrians and motorists.

The Problem

Pedestrian movement in the district and around the Square is fundamentally a residue of an earlier age and does not recognize or support the way the Square is used today. Pedestrian movement is frequently compromised by poorly marked crosswalks, narrow sidewalks, and uncoordinated signal timing. Combined with the high volumes of traffic that pass through the district every day, the result is a place with less pedestrian activity than would occur there and a subsequent mediocre public realm.

The Future

The district must become a better location for pedestrian activity throughout and can begin to do so immediately by the following steps:

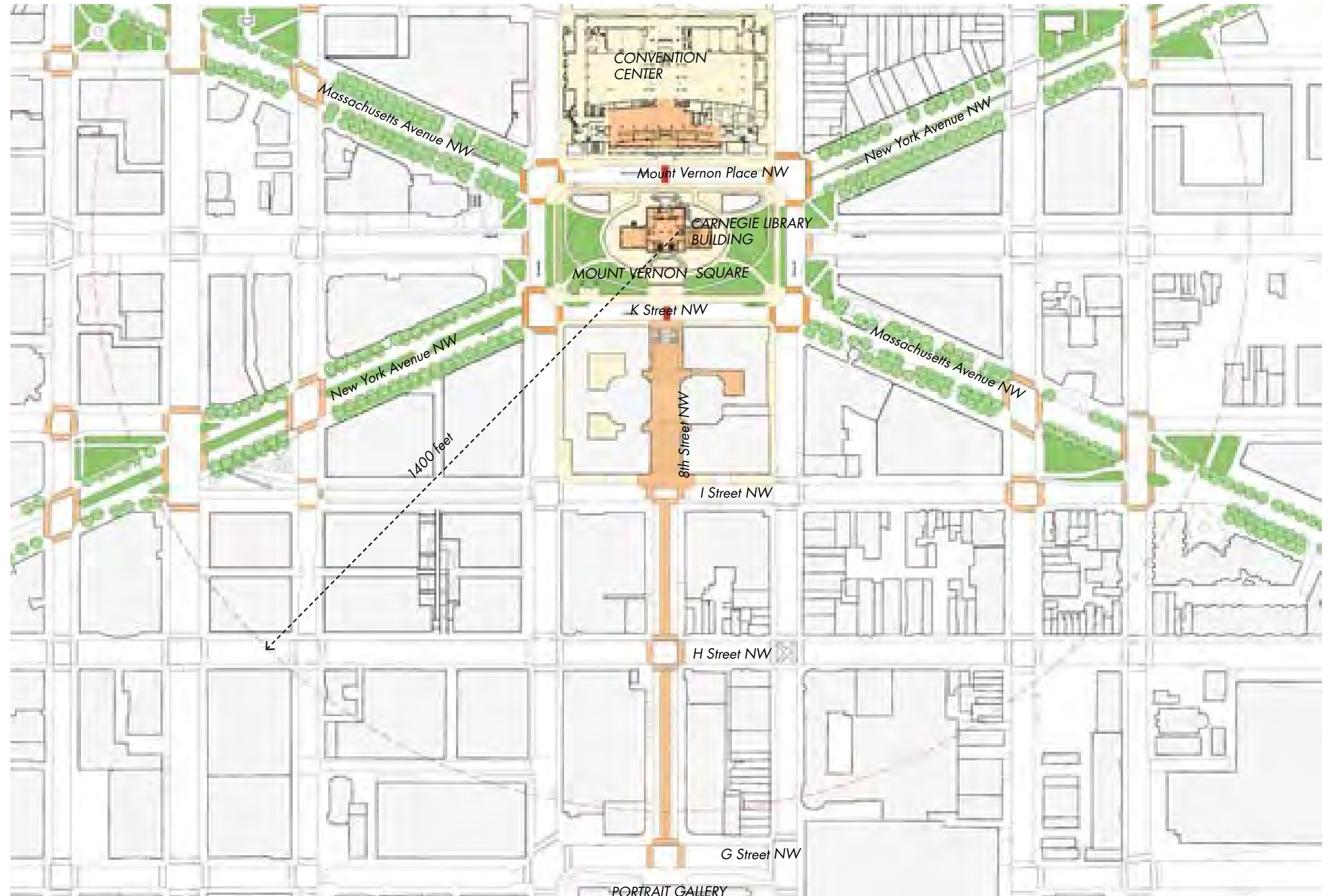
1. Re-stripe all crosswalks at the Square
2. Aligning signal timing to support pedestrian activity at the Square and throughout the district.
3. Add mid-block crossings and signals to support pedestrian movement at the north and south sides of the Square.
4. Coordinate restriping with the re-design of the pathways in the Square.
5. Promote disabled access with improved crosswalk and sidewalk design.
6. Widen the sidewalk at Ninth Street north of the Square to promote better pedestrian connections to the Shaw neighborhood.



Above: crosswalk in Paris. Well marked crosswalks make circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists safer; their high visibility ensures that motorists can see them. Signage clearly directs bicyclists to a specific zone so as to minimize conflicts and safety features such as bollards enhance pedestrian comfort levels.

OVER-ALL PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

- Enhanced crosswalks at the corners of the Square, mid block crosswalks at Mount Vernon Place and K Street south of the Square and sidewalk extensions along K Street NW south of the Square make access to Mount Vernon Square convenient.
- Reconfigured pathways within the square offer more direct connections between 8th Street, the Carnegie building and the Convention Center than is available today.
- Restriped crosswalks around the Federal Reservations (the bowtie parks) at the corners of Mount Vernon Square District make access to these neighborhood amenities more convenient.
- A 24' wide median, narrow 18' roadways on either side and sidewalk extensions at the intersections of 8th Street NW with I Street NW and G Street NW make 8th Street a pedestrian dominated place, with space for events, markets and other managed programs; the street offers a direct connection between the Portrait Gallery and the Carnegie Library building.
- Space for seating and performances on 8th Street NW between K and I Streets NW make an inviting destination for pedestrians.
- The Federal Reservations are within a 5 minute walk of Mount Vernon Square; dense tree canopies on New York and Massachusetts Avenues offer pedestrians a shaded environment to walk between the 'bowtie parks' and Mount Vernon Square.





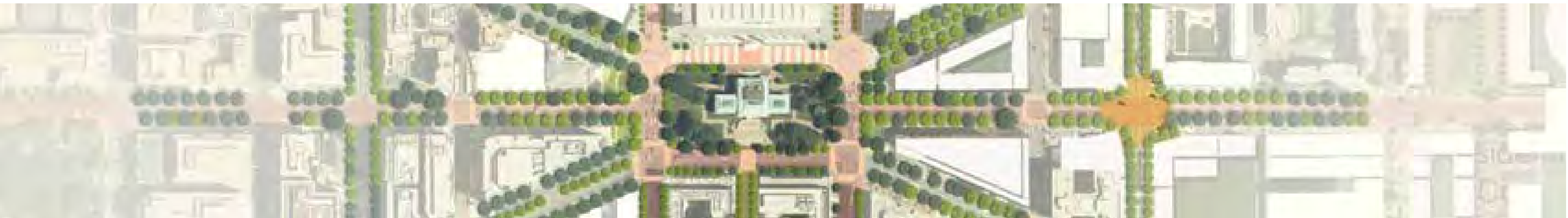
Dynamic Center: Hub of Activity For Surrounding Neighborhoods

Transportation Hub: 21st Century Crossroads

Parks, Plazas and Streets: A Network of Public Places

A Business Strategy for Coordinated Action

3. REALIZING THE VISION





Washington DC is a city of diverse neighborhoods, each with a distinct center of its own; some of these centers, e.g. Dupont Circle, serve multiple neighborhoods and address the needs of diverse users - downtown workers, neighborhood residents, shoppers and visitors. Dupont Circle has a distinct center, a series of well defined spaces and edges that protect users from the high traffic volumes around the Circle.

Located between Shaw, Logan, downtown Washington, Mount Vernon Triangle and Chinatown, Mount Vernon Square has the potential to become a space like Dupont Circle, which unites these distinct residential, commercial and entertainment neighborhoods. In doing so it will also become the dynamic center of a new 'keystone district'.



3.1 DYNAMIC CENTER

A hub of activity for surrounding neighborhoods

MOUNT VERNON SQUARE TODAY

At the center of the project area, Mount Vernon Square is an original part of the historic L'Enfant Plan for Washington DC and a historic landmark.

Initially, the Square was the primary open space for the Northern Liberties neighborhood, and served as a Market Square, a park, a significant entryway to the District, and eventually the location of Andrew Carnegie's gift to Washington, the new Central Library, built in 1903.

The aftermath of the riots of 1968 saw the Square and the surrounding neighborhoods suffer deterioration. With the relocation of the central library to its current location at 9th and G Streets, the Square began to lose its distinct identity and use.

Today, the Square is the potential cornerstone for surrounding development activity and plays an important role in unifying Gallery Place, Chinatown and the Downtown Washington with the adjacent Shaw, Logan and Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhoods.

Several impediments to the realization of this potential exist. The Square lacks a coordinated streetscape at its perimeter and the current location of sidewalks expose pedestrians to high traffic volumes. Complex pedestrian movements are also required to cross the square and is exacerbated by non-existent or poor crosswalks. Pedestrians are given very little reason to walk through the Square; destinations through the Square are unclear. Elements that could help define and buffer the pedestrian realm, such as planting strips, hedges, and fences, commonly found in such successful places as Dupont Circle, are missing.

Although adjacent to the Washington DC Convention Center, the Square's north side does little to encourage interaction with the events and activities of the Convention

Center. Much of the Square in that area turns its back on the Center. The activities of the Center itself are focused away from Mount Vernon Square and pedestrian crossings between the north side of the Square and the Center are limited to the corners, far away from entries to the Mount Vernon Library and the Convention Center.

Specific opportunities to realize the Square's potential as a public space include:

1. Recognizing the difference between the north (WWCC, urban enclosure) and south (8th Street) sides of the Square.
2. Transform the Square from a "park" to an "urban public garden" with a renewed character, enhanced edges and relationship to the surrounding uses;
3. Develop side spaces of the Square for flexible programming related to the Convention Center and other uses and the possible expansion of the Historical Society of Washington DC;
4. Link design and programming opportunities to the Convention Center on the north side of the Square to include restaurants, food vendors, open markets and other similar uses;
5. Develop center mid-block pedestrian crossings at north and south sides to enhance connectivity to adjacent uses and public spaces;
6. Encourage "live" programming, such as open to the public restaurants and cafés in the head-house of the Convention Center, and provide exterior seating at the corners of 7th and 9th Streets NW for table service from the Convention Center.



HUB OF ACTIVITY FOR SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

At the heart of Mount Vernon Square District is a dynamic center that comprises the Carnegie Library building, the Mount Vernon Square grounds, the DC Convention Center and a traffic-free section of 8th Street NW between I and K Streets NW. Also planned are a Convention Center Headquarter Hotel, which broke ground on the 10th of November 2010, developments by Gould Properties, Douglas Jemal Development and Boston Properties. Once built, these projects will frame the Square and reap immense value from a revitalized square and public environment.

All surrounding developments should open out onto the Square, with transparent ground floor facades, attractive retail fronts, active sidewalks and cohesive landscape, paving and lighting treatments. The Carnegie Library building and the surrounding grounds of Mount Vernon Square, through active programming, adaptive re-use strategies neighborhood activities, cultural events, and activities associated with the DC Convention Center will become an important nexus for the District.

The DC Convention Center (DCCC), a major investment for the city, is further leveraged and integrated with Mount Vernon Square through creative programming and event management, streetscape upgrades, and co-sharing of facilities for events.

Eighth Street NW south of the Square is a public right-of-way, closed to traffic and bounded by the Renaissance Hotel to the west and office buildings to the East, and is ideal as flexible space for events that complements the grounds of the Square and the large internal exhibition spaces of the Convention Center. Eighth Street presents the possibility of a synergistic relationship between both the Convention Center and Mount Vernon Square as a new destination for the region.



The new center comprises Mount Vernon Square's grounds, the Carnegie Library building, the Convention Center, 8th Street NW, and the 'frame' of streets and buildings around the Square.

- Future developments around Mount Vernon Square will create an active frame of streets and buildings.**
- 1 Convention center hotel
 - 2 Douglas Jemal Properties
 - 3 Douglas Jemal Properties
 - 4 Boston Properties
 - 5 Gould Properties
 - 6 Gould Properties
 - 7 City Center
 - 8 Carr America

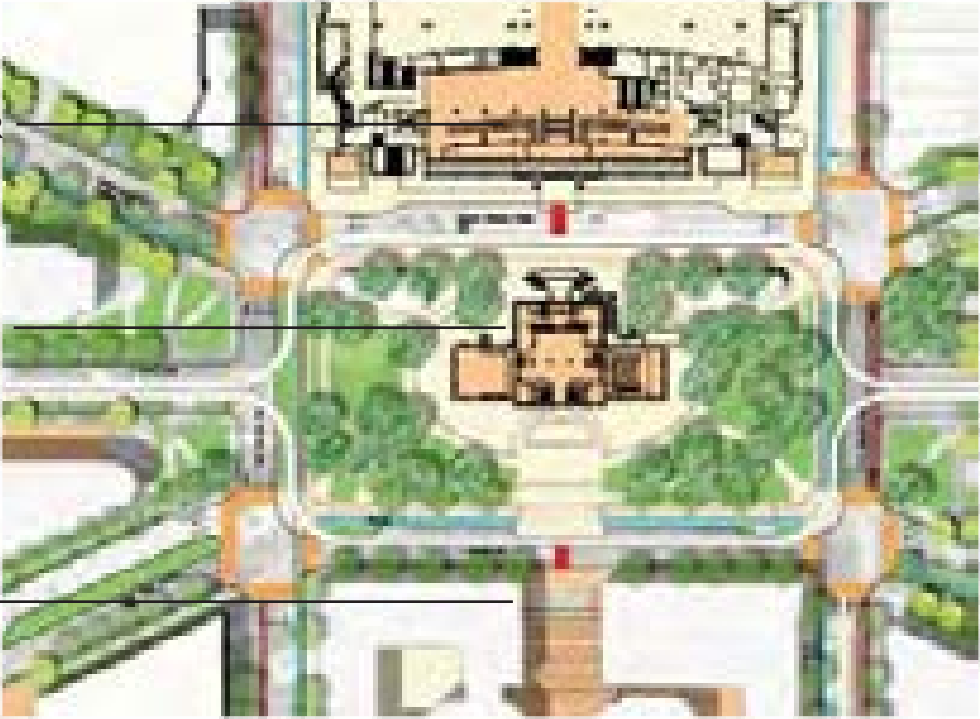
THE CENTER - THE CONVENTION CENTER AND MOUNT VERNON SQUARE



THE CONVENTION CENTER

The Walter E. Washington Convention Center - additions to the corners and active programming within the lobby will make the Convention Center a new 'living room' for Washington, with Mount Vernon Square as its front yard.

MOUNT VERNON SQUARE



8TH STREET

A synergistic relationship of programs, events, and public realm improvements between the Convention Center, Mount Vernon Square and 8th Street NW creates a hub for surrounding neighborhoods and a new destination for the region.



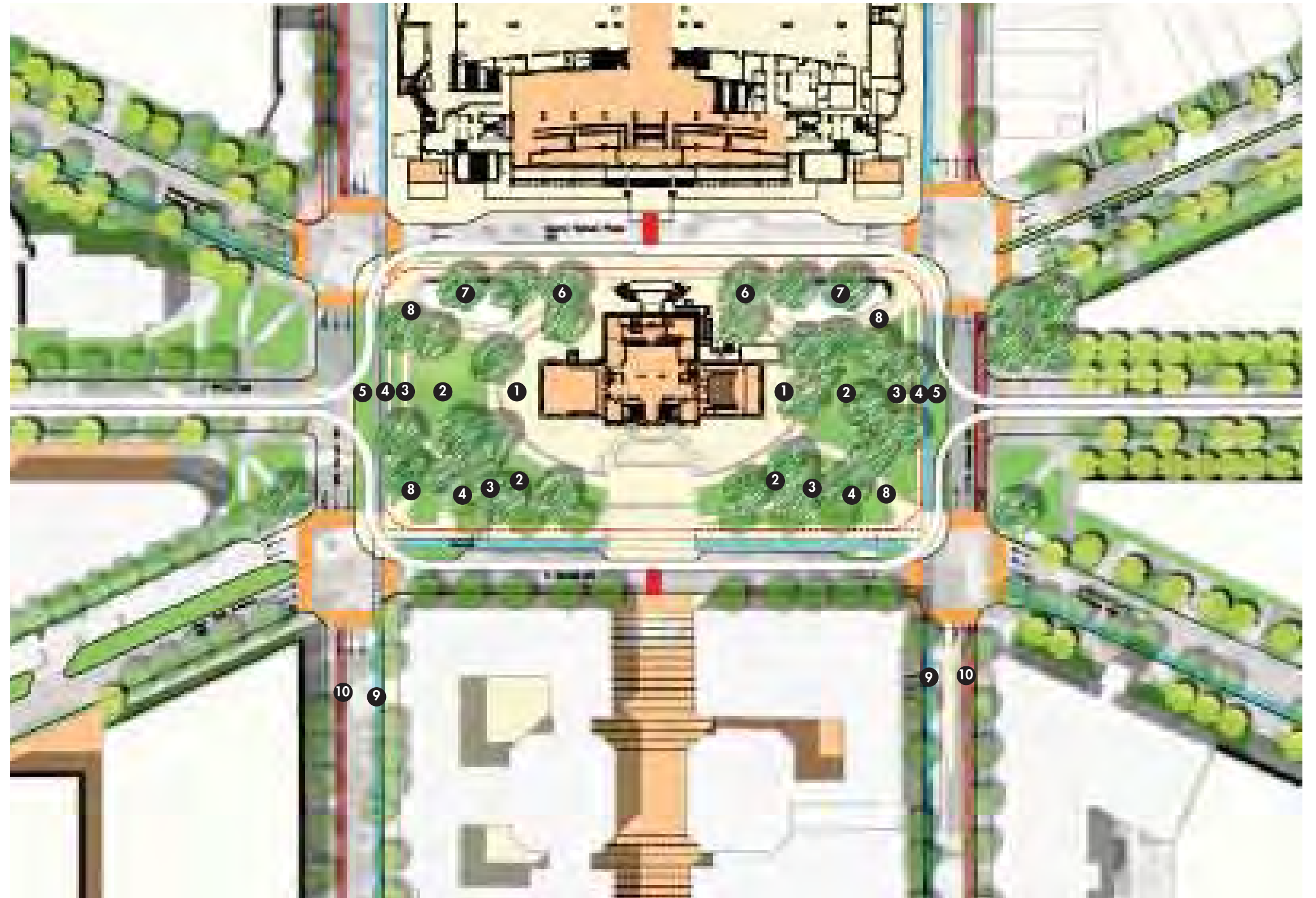
Mount Vernon Square's grounds - the north edge is a plaza space with active programming, outdoor seating, access to transit and convenient access to and from the convention center.



8th Street NW as a flexible event space, where programs and events are coordinated with Mount Vernon Square, the Carnegie Library building and the Convention Center.

FUTURE MOUNT VERNON SQUARE

- 1 A 'parterre' addition to the square's grounds serves as a spill out space for a re-programmed Carnegie building and flexible stage space.
- 2 A series of 'inner gardens' serve as a recreational space for users of the park. These gardens are well-protected from adjacent traffic and are linked by a series of steps to the parterre.
- 3 An outer pathway allows convenient diagonal shortcuts for pedestrians through the square.
- 4 Outer gardens serve as a protective layer of space from adjacent traffic movements and allow pedestrians to move through the square without having to access the inner gardens.
- 5 The Square is expanded to accommodate bike and streetcar facilities.
- 6 Paved areas for outdoor seating to support food service.
- 7 Pavilions for food services and other amenities.
- 8 Reconfigured pathways, to make pedestrian access more direct.
- 9 Potential bicycle-only lane
- 10 Potential dedicated bus lane



MOUNT VERNON SQUARE - SECTION LOOKING NORTH

A series of layered spaces accommodates diverse uses within the grounds, including outdoor food and vending, passive recreation, programmed events. The outer garden spaces shield the grounds from the negative effects of traffic on Mount Vernon Place NW, K, 7th and 9th Streets NW.

The expansion of the Square's grounds also makes room for alternative transportation modes such as the future streetcar, bicycles, and other modes of transit.





THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILDING

PARTERRE

INNER PATH

INNER GARDEN

OUTER PATH

OUTER GARDEN

STREETCAR

7TH STREET NW ROAD

SIDEWALK

RESERVATION 71

MOUNT VERNON SQUARE

A TRULY PUBLIC CONVENTION CENTER

The Walter Washington Convention Center, a major investment for the city, can be integrated with Mount Vernon Square through creative programming and event management, streetscape upgrades, and co-sharing of event facilities.



CONVENTION CENTER

MOUNT VERNON PLACE

CARNEGIE LIBR

MOUNT VERNON

EIGHTH STREET NW - FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE



ARY BUILDING

ON SQUARE

K STREET ROW

8TH STREET NW

THE CONVENTION CENTER IN THE FUTURE



Infill at the corners of the Convention Center provides food and vending, complementing the proposed pavilions at the northwest and northwest corners of Mount Vernon Square. The new corners help extend an inviting retail environment north of the square along 7th and 9th Streets NW.

THE CONVENTION CENTER AND MOUNT VERNON SQUARE IN THE FUTURE



An expanded square across Mount Vernon Square in front of the Convention Center, offers a paved area for outdoor seating and engagement with the front door of the WWCC.

Streetscape improvements - lighting, landscape elements, signage and a midblock crossing - unify the front of the Convention Center with Mount Vernon Square. A streetcar stop at the northwest corner of the Square connects the plaza to a broader, city-wide audience, including transit riders and tourists.

EIGHTH STREET IN THE FUTURE



Eighth Street is a significant key to the revitalization of the Square and is positioned to be one of the first places to be transformed. The section of Eighth Street directly to the south of MVS can be used immediately for events and concerts, and further enhanced with design improvements coordinated with the adjacent Renaissance Hotel and the Convention Center.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Dynamic Center - Hub of Activity For Surrounding Neighborhoods

IMMEDIATE (1 TO 3 YEARS)

SHORT TERM (3 TO 5 YEARS)

LONG TERM (OVER 5 YEARS)

1. THE SQUARE

Mount Vernon Square Grounds and the NPS Reservations

- Plant seasonal colored flowers in the four smaller reservations around Mount Vernon Square (Reservation Numbers 70, 71, 175, 176).
- Install temporary park equipment – wooden horses, tires and other play equipment – within the Square to encourage residents of the surrounding communities to use the Square’s grounds.
- Unify the north edge of the Square with the Convention Center through -
 - Paving treatments and Public art;
 - Consistent lighting (in trees, low-level and streetlights);
 - Vending kiosks and outdoor seating along the north edge of the Square; kiosks are to be placed at the northwest and northeast corners.
 - Outdoor programming for events, food vending.

- Complete design drawings for the smaller reservations and Square that enhance pedestrian connectivity and safety through the Square, provide opportunities for events and increase overall beautification.
- Install seating, lighting and public art elements within the Square.

- Implement changes to Square, such as:
 - Accommodate Streetcar stops on the Square.
 - Expand the Square, as part of the re-alignment of 7th, 9th, K Streets NW and Mount Vernon Place NW to accommodate future Streetcar tracks.
 - Install fences along 7th and 9th Streets NW, to create a sidewalk environment protected from adjacent traffic; fences should be installed close to the curb so that the sidewalks are perceived as being a part of the Square. Re-align paths within the Square to create a functional pedestrian circulation system

The Carnegie Library Building

- Restore front steps on the south of the Carnegie Building.
- Complete design drawings for the building.

- Introduce a restaurant in the west wing of the Carnegie Library Building and connect it with a paved outdoor area along the north of the Square.
- Build “parterre” additions abutting the west and the east of the building; the parterres provide outdoor platforms that unifies the north and south of the Square’s grounds.

- Build a transparent addition to the north face of the Carnegie Building to serve as a lobby.

2. FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE

8th Street NW

- Coordinate with surrounding businesses (the Renaissance Hotel, JBG properties) to program outdoor events and food vending along 8th Street NW, between I and K Streets NW. Also install landscape elements in planters to provide shade, places of respite.
- Program open air events/ venues with the Convention Center, Chinatown Merchants and the Smithsonian along 8th Street NW between G and H Streets NW at the Portrait Gallery.
- Work with DCCAH to create a public art program for 8th Street NW.

- Develop a streetscape to accommodate vending while allowing existing uses such as loading and deliveries.
- Coordinate upgrades to building facades fronting on 8th Street NW.

3. THE FRAME

North Frame: The Walter E. Washington Convention Center

TIMELINE

	IMMEDIATE (1 TO 3 YEARS)	SHORT TERM (3 TO 5 YEARS)	LONG TERM (OVER 5 YEARS)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program outdoor food vending at the corners of the Convention Center at 7th and 9th Streets NW. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the Convention Center Lobby more accessible to the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Implement a Public Art and Signage strategy for the Convention Center façade along Mount Vernon Place NW. o Coordinate with the Smithsonian Institute to install exhibits in the Convention Center lobby. o Coordinate with other non-federal museums (Newseum/ the Spy Museum) to host special events and exhibitions in the Convention Center lobby. o Implement other uses such as a Visitors Center function, café or restaurant. • Design and implement an inviting retail frontage for the Convention Center’s 7th and 9th Street facades, with emphasis on store canopies, storefront windows, lighting and doorway elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill the corners of the Convention Center facing Mount Vernon Place NW with retail outlets and outdoor seating.
<h4>South Frame: Renaissance Center Hotel and JBG Properties</h4>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate zoning recommendations that encourage active ground floor uses and transparent facades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the facades of the buildings for public art installations and light shows (coordinate with DCCAH). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate transparent facades, active ground floor uses and spill-out space for sidewalks along K Street NW for future redevelopment of the properties.
<h4>East Frame: Boston Properties and Douglas Development</h4>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate zoning recommendations to encourage active ground floor uses and transparent facades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with NPS to allow use of Reservations 176 and 71 as spill out spaces for restaurants at the ground floor of the adjacent buildings. 	



A well-balanced, multimodal transportation system is not new to Washington DC. A new transportation system buildings on the city's traditions of a balanced system, adapted to future needs and technologies.