# BEFORE THE PUBLIC SPACE COMMITTEE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Application of Boston Properties, Inc.

March 22, 2017

# CONCEPT REVIEW – 2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT

#### I. Introduction

This is the application of Boston Properties, Inc. ("Applicant") for concept review of public space improvements related to the proposed redevelopment of 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW. The proposed improvements will replace a pair of existing, dated office buildings with a new mixed-use office and retail building that will significantly enhance and improve the public realm surrounding the site. To facilitate the improvements, the Applicant requests concept approval for a curb cut on I Street, covered utility vaults adjacent to the building along Pennsylvania Avenue, the relocation of an existing Capital Bikeshare station, and four bay window projections that modestly exceed the projection limitations of the Building Code.

# II. Background

The property that is the subject of this application is located at 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW and 2121 I Street NW, on Lots 50 and 51 in Square 75 ("Property"). The Property is located within the boundaries of the Foggy Bottom campus ("Campus") of The George Washington University ("University"). Properties within the Campus that front on Pennsylvania Avenue are generally used by the University for commercial uses that recognize and capitalize on the properties' important investment potential. Such commercial uses generate non-enrollment driven revenue that supports the University's academic mission. For example:

- Property one block west, at 2200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, was developed by the Applicant pursuant to a ground lease as a mixed-use office, retail, and residential development.
- Property immediately west of the site, at 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, is currently under construction as a mixed-use office and retail building.

The University has chosen the Applicant as its development partner to redevelop 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW in a similar fashion. Through the process that led to the Applicant's selection as the developer of the Property, the University chose to incorporate the 2121 I Street NW property in the proposed development site as it would significantly enhance the potential of the redevelopment to achieve key campus plan goals, such as a focused "retail corridor" along I Street stretching from the Foggy Bottom Metrorail station to the Shops at 2000 Penn.

Properties located within the Campus are subject to the terms and conditions of the 2007 Foggy Bottom Campus Plan and a related First-Stage PUD for the Campus ("Campus Plan / PUD"). The Property will be developed through that Campus Plan / PUD process. The Campus Plan / PUD conditioned its approval on the University's development of a framework of a uniform streetscape plan for the Campus ("Streetscape Plan"). The Streetscape Plan includes, among other features, certain non-standard design features, such as brick sidewalks on east-west streets throughout the campus. The Streetscape Plan was developed in conjunction with the Office of Planning (OP) and District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and all University projects pursuant to the Campus Plan / PUD have included streetscape improvements and their respective covenants consistent with the Streetscape Plan.

#### **III.** Existing Conditions

The Property is roughly trapezoidal in shape, with frontage on Pennsylvania Avenue, 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and I Street. The Property slopes significantly—approximately 12 feet downward, from northeast to southwest. 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue is improved with an 8-story commercial office building with ground floor retail that is recessed within an arcade. Because of the site slope, the retail is elevated along I Street, creating a blank wall condition along the building's I Street frontage. A Capital Bikeshare station with 34 docks is located on I Street, along this blank wall.

2121 I Street is improved with an 8-story administrative office building. A public alley runs along the western edge of the Property, adjacent to 2121 I Street NW. The alley system within Square 75 was reconfigured as a part of the approvals for the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue development. The D.C. Council approved a 24-foot wide alley on paper, but DDOT concluded that the actual paved alley itself will be 22 feet wide. The public alley segment adjacent to 2121 I Street is the only point of access in and out of the Square 75 public alley system.

Vehicular parking to 2100 Pennsylvania is located from a 38-foot wide curb cut on I Street. The existing building has a parking garage with approximately 250 parking spaces Loading and service for both 2100 Pennsylvania and 2121 I Street is accessed from the public alley.

Other uses within the Square include:

- The under-construction 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue development, a 250,000-square foot office building with approximately 154 parking spaces.
- The H.B. Burns Medical Building, located at 2150 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, home of the Medical Faculty Associates ("MFA"), the largest independent physician group in the District.

- The Ambulatory Care Center, located at the intersection of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and I Street NW, an outpatient clinic affiliated with MFA and The George Washington University Hospital.
- The President Condominium, located at 2141 I Street NW, with approximately 125 dwelling units.

To the south of the Property, across I Street, are two residence halls and the Marvin Student Center, as well as a curb cut and loading area that serves the residence hall and student center. To the east of the Property, across 21<sup>st</sup> Street, is James Monroe Park, operated by the National Park Service. To the north, across Pennsylvania Avenue, is the headquarters of the International Finance Corporation.

# IV. Proposed Project

The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Property into a new 11-story mixed-use building with approximately 440,000 square feet of office use, a minimum of approximately 30,000 square feet retail use, and approximately 330-350 parking spaces ("Project"). Retail uses are focused along I Street, where the floor slabs will be configured to line up with the grade of the adjacent sloping sidewalk. The primary office lobby entrance will be located at the prominent Pennsylvania Avenue/21<sup>st</sup> Street corner. Ground level uses along Pennsylvania Avenue will vary depending on the tenant mix within the project, and could include a separate lobby entrance and supporting spaces for the lead office tenant, additional retail space, and uses that serve both the neighborhood and the building such as a daycare. Additional retail space will be located in the building's lower level with strong connections to the I Street retail spaces, underneath the Pennsylvania Avenue lobby areas.

The Project's loading and service area is located off the public alley. For reasons discussed in detail below, the Project's vehicular parking is located from a proposed curb cut on I Street NW. The proposed curb cut and ramp to the below-grade garage will include a dedicated bicycle lane into the garage. The building's mix of uses will create pedestrian access points along all three street frontages.

The Project's architectural design is organized around the concept of a primary corner element at 21<sup>st</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue, with secondary horizontal elements proceeding west and south from that corner. To help articulate and animate both elements, the design architect proposes a series of expressive and streamlined banding, punctuated by bays that appear as if they are animated ripples in the banding.

The Project will have a height of 130 feet, stepping down to a height of 110 feet along I Street, and will be constructed to a floor area ratio ("FAR") of approximately 9.0. The Project

will be entitled through a Planned Unit Development and related amendment to the Zoning Map as well as an amendment to the Campus Plan / PUD. The rezoning sought through the PUD permits a height of 130 feet and a density of 12.0 FAR.

#### V. Site Access / Curb Cut

The Applicant proposes to locate loading access to the Project from the existing alley system, on the western end of the Project through an existing public alley. The Project's loading dock is adjacent to the parking entrance to the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue project immediately to its northwest; the 2112 project's loading dock is then located immediately west of its parking entrance. Because of this Project's adjacency to the parking and loading entrances to the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue building and the use of the shared public alley, the Project's loading area is designed to facilitate front-in, front-out truck movements.<sup>1</sup> This will keep the Project's truck turning movements within the building, and out of the public alley system. It will avoid the need for the Project's trucks to back in and out across the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue project's garage access point. The Project's loading and service area will also accommodate the turning movements that are necessary for the 2112 project's trucks to maneuver into its loading dock.

The Applicant proposes to locate parking access to the Project's underground garage from a 24-foot wide curb cut on I Street NW. The proposed curb cut satisfies all DDOT requirements, including distance from the nearby public alley and nearby intersection, geometry, grade, proximity to nearby trees, and minimum sight distance. The Applicant also proposes to maintain the same brick sidewalk material as the rest of the sidewalk across the curb cut, which will provide a clear visual cue to drivers to expect pedestrian activity. Finally, while the existing curb cut for the existing 2100 Pennsylvania building is offset from the curb cut across I Street, the Applicant proposes to locate the new curb cut so it is generally aligned with the curb cut across the street.

The Applicant studied locating parking access for the Project off the public alley, but concluded that it was not feasible given existing and anticipated vehicular activity within the Square 75 alley system. Some history is helpful. In 2012, the University conducted an extensive assessment of alley conditions in connection with the approvals for the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue project, which located parking access for its 154-car garage from the public alley. At that time, the University's traffic consultant observed average truck traffic of approximately 24 trucks per day within the alley, and DDOT concurred that "a high level of activity is already occurring in the alley." DDOT ultimately approved the parking access for the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue project from the alley, but only after the University agreed to a robust transportation performance monitoring plan, which addressed DDOT's concerns about the

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Trucks 30-feet or smaller will access the proposed loading area front-in/front-out via the alley. Occasional 40-foot trucks may access the site but will back into the site from the alley.

potential parking garage access in the alley that might cause queuing and delay issues given existing loading and service activity in the alley.

Based on this history, as well as an updated analysis incorporating the Project, the Applicant and its traffic consultant have concluded that parking access cannot be located in the public alley. The Square 75 alley system features only one access point to the surrounding street network, so all alley traffic must use the same access point. Upon completion and opening of the 2112 project, the public alley will feature projected volumes of 150 vehicles during the AM peak hour and 135 vehicles during the PM peak hour. This Project's parking garage access is projected to generate an additional 214 vehicles during the AM peak hour and 195 vehicles during the PM peak hour. If this Project's parking were to be located off the alley as well, the total number of vehicles (364 vph AM / 330 vph PM) would potentially overwhelm the alley system with unacceptable queuing and delays.

Even more importantly, the volume of truck traffic creates additional challenges, since truck turning movements will necessarily conflict with passenger vehicle movements both at the alley entrance and at the junction of the 2112 parking entrance and the adjacent loading docks. This could further exacerbate potential queuing and delay issues resulting from an increase in volume associated with the Project, even with existing loading restrictions required with 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue that restrict 40' truck deliveries to outside of the AM and PM peak periods. While the Applicant's traffic consultant and DDOT have both concluded that the parking garage access for 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue can function in the Square 75 alley system with robust management, adding the volume associated with this Project to the alley would upset this careful and delicate balance.

Once the Applicant concluded that the public alley would not be a workable location for parking access, the Applicant also evaluated all three street frontages, and concluded I Street was the most appropriate location for parking access. From a site planning and project design perspective, I Street is the most appropriate location to place access to underground parking. The elevation on I Street is approximately 12 feet lower than the elevation on Pennsylvania avenue, which allows the parking ramp to begin its descent lower than the building's ground floor. In addition, given Pennsylvania Avenue's prominence, it is unsuitable for parking access. And parking access cannot be located on 21st Street because there is not enough frontage to accommodate both the driveway and the required distances from each intersection. (The Property only has 132 feet of frontage on 21st Street, which leaves only 12 feet for a curb cut after the required minimum 60 feet of distance from each intersection.) Furthermore, the Project's primary office and retail entrances are located at the nearby intersections; passenger drop-off and pedestrian activity would create further challenges at this location.

Therefore, the Applicant proposes to locate parking access on I Street. The existing building's parking access is located on I Street, so the curb cut will be a familiar condition to regular pedestrians. Furthermore, the Project will provide the Applicant with an opportunity to improve the existing condition by (1) narrowing the existing curb cut from 38 feet to 24 feet; (2) adjusting the location of the curb cut so it is generally aligned with the curb cut across the street; and (3) extending sidewalk paving across the curb cut so that it emphasizes the primacy of pedestrian rather than vehicular activity. In addition, the Applicant will work closely with OP and DDOT to identify and incorporate other pedestrian safety measures.

# VI. <u>Utility Vaults</u>

The Applicant proposes to locate the utility vaults within the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk, in covered, conditioned vaults adjacent to the building and located next to the Project's electrical room. The proposed location will not have any adverse impacts on pedestrian safety and convenience, and it will not adversely impact other improvements in public space, such as street trees or related planting areas.

The Applicant is aware of and carefully considered the District's preferred order of location for utility vaults: private property, then in a public alley, then in landscaped public parking, and finally within covered and air-conditioned vaults. Here, covered and air-conditioned vaults are the only feasible option.

Broadly, the location of the utility vaults is driven by the Property's configuration and relationship to surrounding streets. The Property fronts on three streets, and accordingly the Project features uniform streetwalls built out to the property line on all three frontages. Given urban design goals, it would not be appropriate to set back any of the facades from the property line to create room for utility vaults. The Property's fourth street frontage, along the alley, similarly creates little opportunity for vaults on private property. Although there is some open space located adjacent to the alley façade, it is in the middle of a very active area that serves not only the loading and service activity for the Project but also the turning movements for the trucks serving the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue building. The area is also immediately adjacent to the parking entrance for the 2112 building.

The Applicant also investigated the potential to locate the utility vaults within the public alley near the Project. However, a number of underground utilities are located within the public alley, which precludes locating the vaults in the alley adjacent to the Project. Furthermore, even if the vaults could be shifted west of the utilities themselves, the location of the utilities would create challenges for connecting the vaults to the Project. (As a practical matter, the anticipated level of vehicular and truck activity in the alley would also create significant conflicts during the construction, maintenance, and access to the utility vaults.)

The streetscape character and design for the surrounding street frontages precludes locating vaults in a landscaped public parking area. The Pennsylvania Avenue and 21<sup>st</sup> Street frontages are both urban "downtown" streetscapes characterized by broad, wide sidewalks that run from the tree planting area up to the streetwall in order to create an active, pedestrian-oriented connection between the sidewall and building. Similarly, the I Street streetscape is envisioned as a retail-oriented corridor animated by active streetscape spaces such as sidewalk cafes rather than passive "public parking" areas.

For these reasons, the Applicant must locate the utility vaults within the sidewalk in covered vaults adjacent to the Project. The utility vaults will be covered and conditioned in accordance with DDOT's standards. A brief survey of conditions along Pennsylvania Avenue between 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Circle catalogued vaults within each block, on both sides of the street, many of which are grated vaults and some located within the pedestrian clear path. Here, the Applicant proposes covered, conditioned vaults that will be located adjacent to the building, away from the pedestrian clear path.

# VII. Capital Bikeshare Station

As noted above, a Capital Bikeshare station with capacity for 34 bicycles is located adjacent to the Property along I Street near the intersection with 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The current location is a "blank wall" that is created by the grade change from Pennsylvania Avenue to I Street. However, with the construction of the Project, this location be transformed into an active and vibrant retail storefront with active entrances, storefront windows, and potential future sidewalk cafes or other street-activating uses. Therefore, the Applicant proposes to relocate the Capital Bikeshare station across the street to a portion of James Monroe Park adjacent to the sidewalk. The Applicant will work with the National Park Service (NPS) and DDOT to facilitate this relocation.

The Applicant considered multiple alternative options for the relocated Bikeshare station before settling on the selected location. In doing so, the Applicant weighed key criteria such as ensuring the visibility of the station to attract new users and relocating to a nearby location to ensure continued service to regular users of the existing station. The Applicant also considered the effect that potential relocation sites would have on the adjacent sidewalk and public realm infrastructure. Based on these criteria, the Applicant selected the space adjacent to Monroe Park. The Park currently lacks activity-generating uses, and the presence of the Bikeshare station immediately adjacent would facilitate use of the park. At the same time, the Bikeshare station would remain proximate to major destinations, including the Project, the Shops at 2000 Penn and associated office building, and the University's student center.

Alternative locations ruled out by the Applicant included:

- I Street, 2100 block, north side: this is the existing location. For reasons discussed above, a location adjacent to the Project was eliminated. Also eliminated was a location adjacent to the tree box zone, which would interfere with a continuous pedestrian clear path and effectively eliminate the potential for sidewalk cafes or similar neighborhood-activating uses
- I Street, 2000 and 2100 blocks, south side, and 800 block of 21st Street: existing improvements in public space, including steps, ramps, and landscaping, preclude the location of the Bikeshare station in these locations. In addition, many of the projections and landscaping are associated with historic landmarks and contributing buildings in the George Washington University / Old West End Historic District.

## VIII. Bay Window Projections

As shown on the projections plans, the building design features certain bay windows that project into public space. All of the bay windows are set back the appropriate distance from the curb as required under Section 3202.7.1.1. Furthermore, all of the bay windows meet the width limitations of Section 3202.10.3.1 of the Building Code. Finally, most of the bay window are four feet in depth and therefore meet the projection requirements of Section 3202.10.3.3 of the Building Code. However, at four locations (once on Pennsylvania Avenue, once on I Street, and once on each corner at 21<sup>st</sup> Street), the Applicant proposes 6-foot, rather than 4-foot projections, which will require a modification of the Building Code requirements for projections under Section 3202.4.1 of the Building Code. Accordingly, the Applicant seeks conceptual approval for the 6-foot projections at this time, with the understanding that such projections will ultimately require approval of a code modification.

The primary object of the proposed bay window depth is to embellish the building and accommodate its unique, expressive, curvilinear banding. The initial building design featured projections that complied with the Code in all respects, but after internal review and discussions with OP, the façade design seemed too subtle and restrained. Based on this feedback, the design team refined the design to incorporate slightly deeper projections to accentuate the façade movement and articulation.

The modifications are not intended primarily to occupy public space or capture additional floor area. In fact, the area captured is minor and limited to narrow, two-story "points" on each extended projection. The total area gained by the projection modification is only 448 square

feet<sup>2</sup>, which is less than 0.1% of the overall building area, and the Project is otherwise well below the available density that could be achieved through the PUD process. Moreover, the Applicant has not maximized the use of bay windows as permitted by code; rather they are used selectively to enhance the sense of movement in the façade. Finally, the use of projections to embellish building design is consistent with other buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue, including both the IMF and World Bank headquarters a couple of blocks to the east.

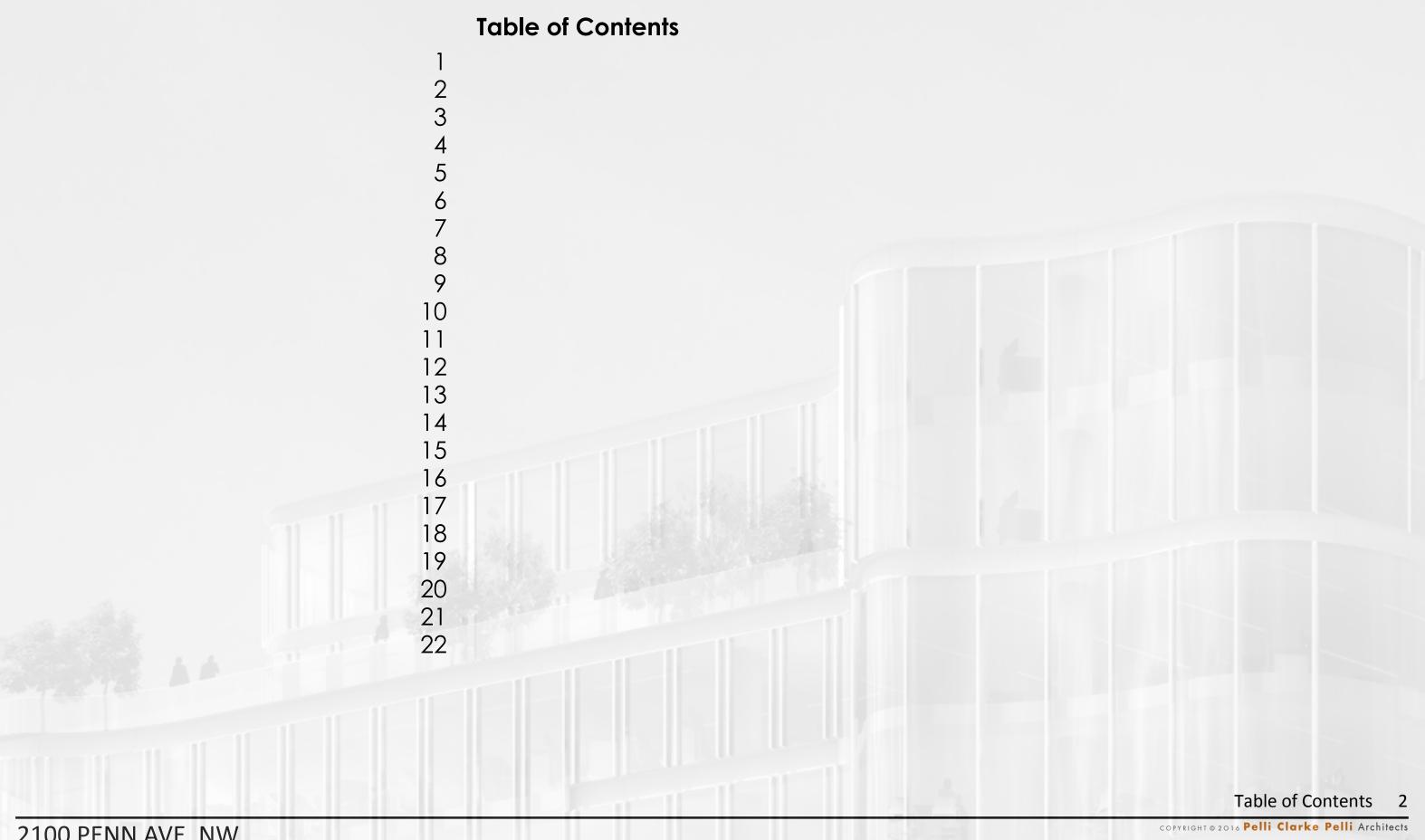
# IX. Conclusion

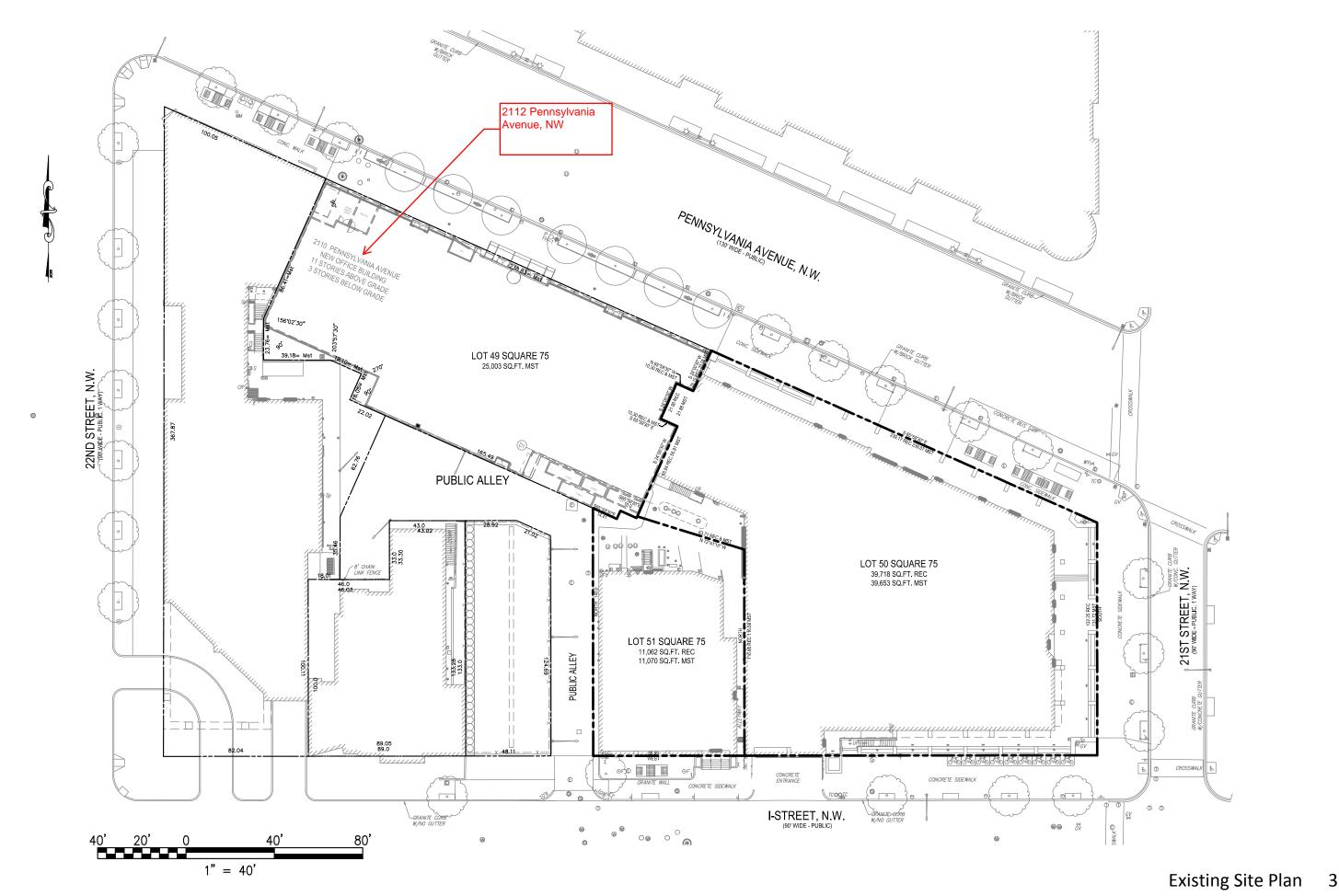
For the reasons set forth above, the Applicant requests conceptual approval for site access, utility vaults, relocation of a Capital Bikeshare Station, and modification of the projection requirements as set forth herein.

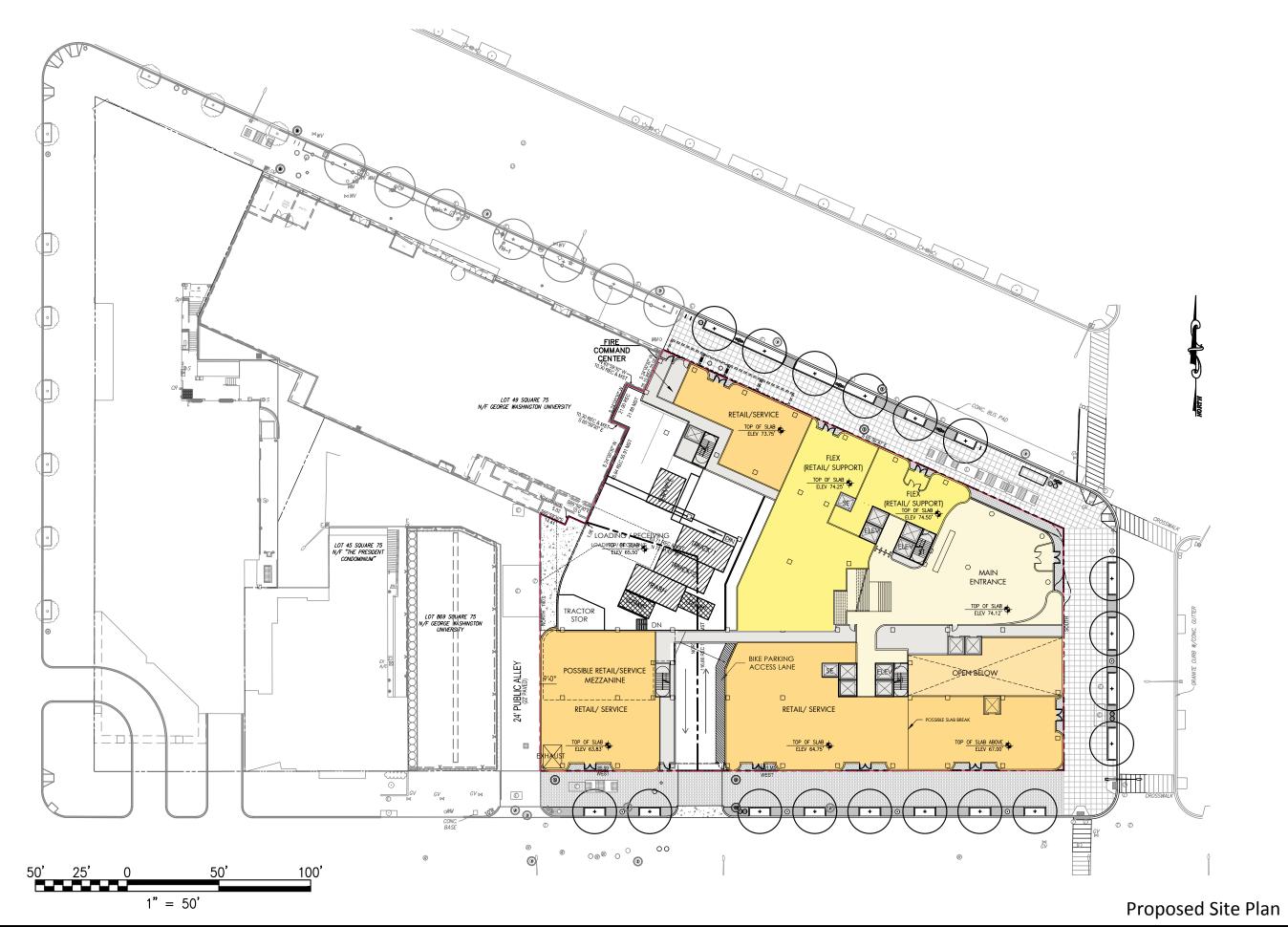
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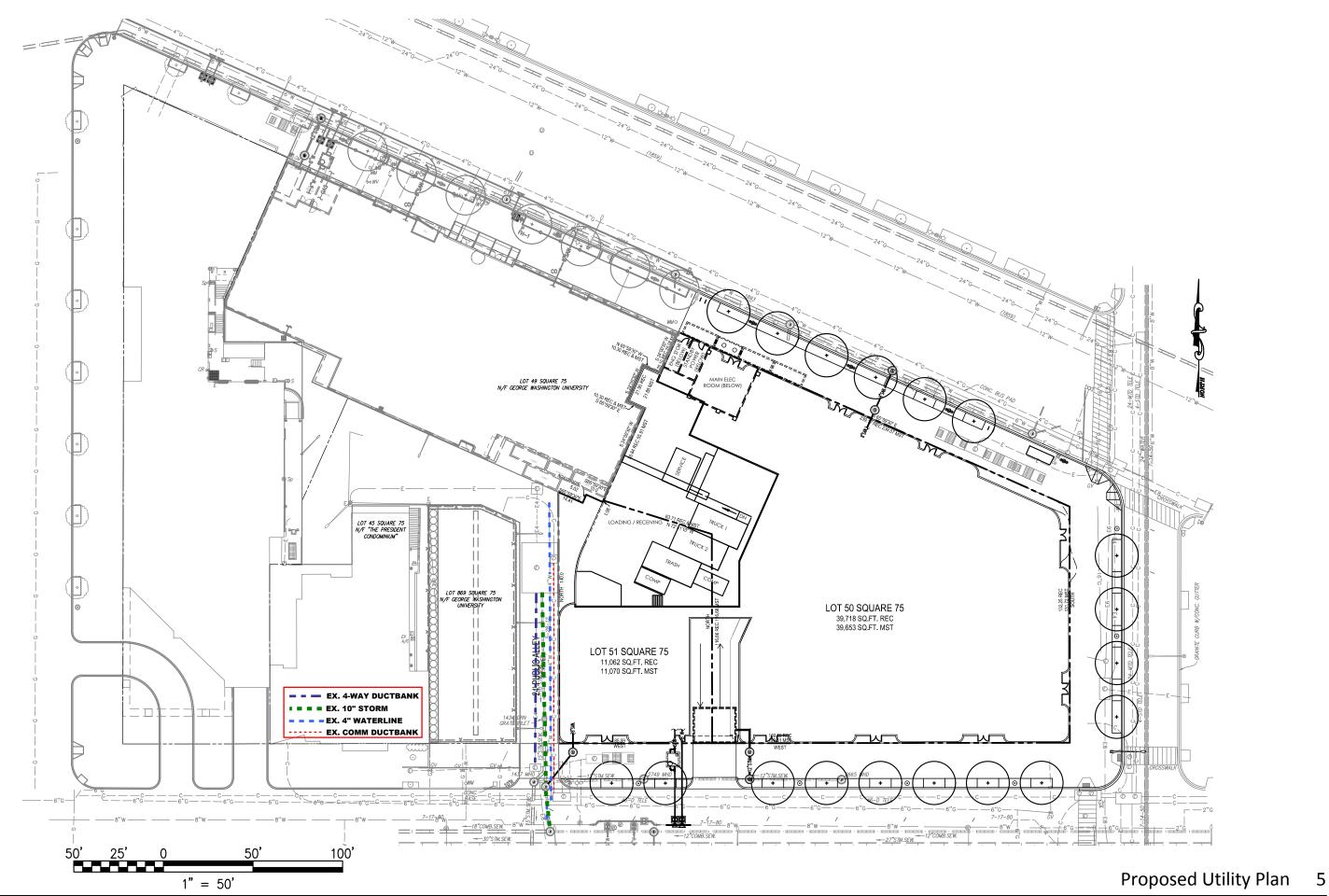
The additional depth for the two bay windows on I Street and Pennsylvania Avenue yields an additional 74 square feet of area per window. The additional depth for the bay window at 21<sup>st</sup> and I Street, and each segment of the bay window at 21<sup>st</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue, yields an additional 60 square feet of area per segment.







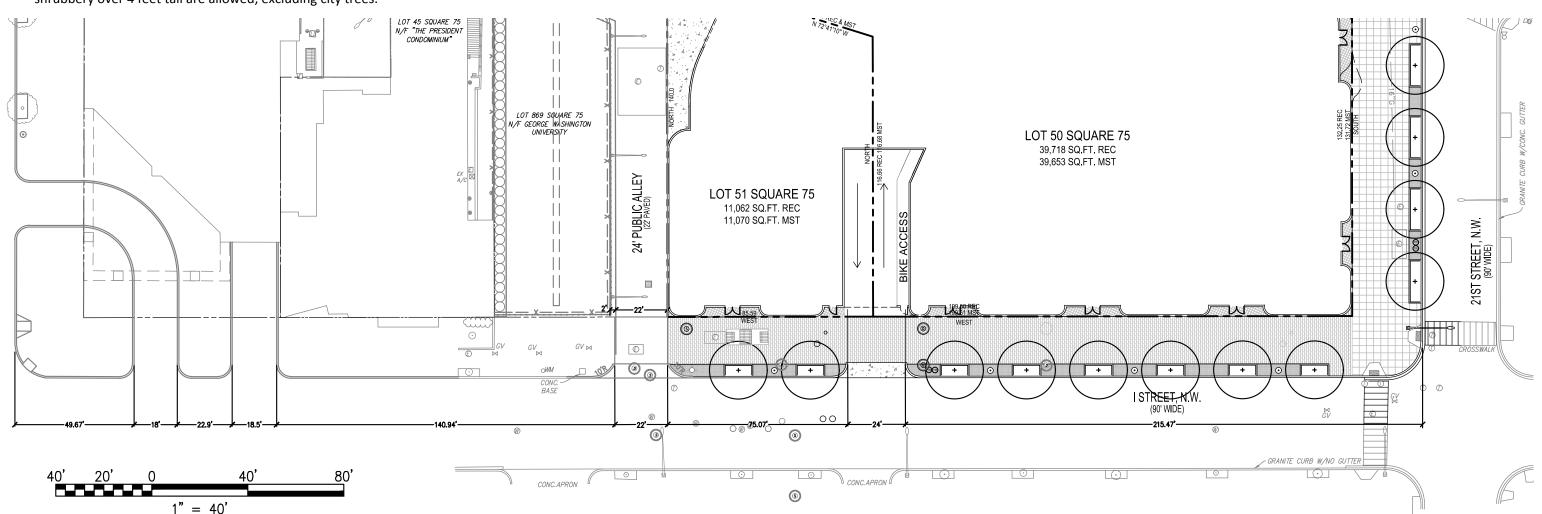


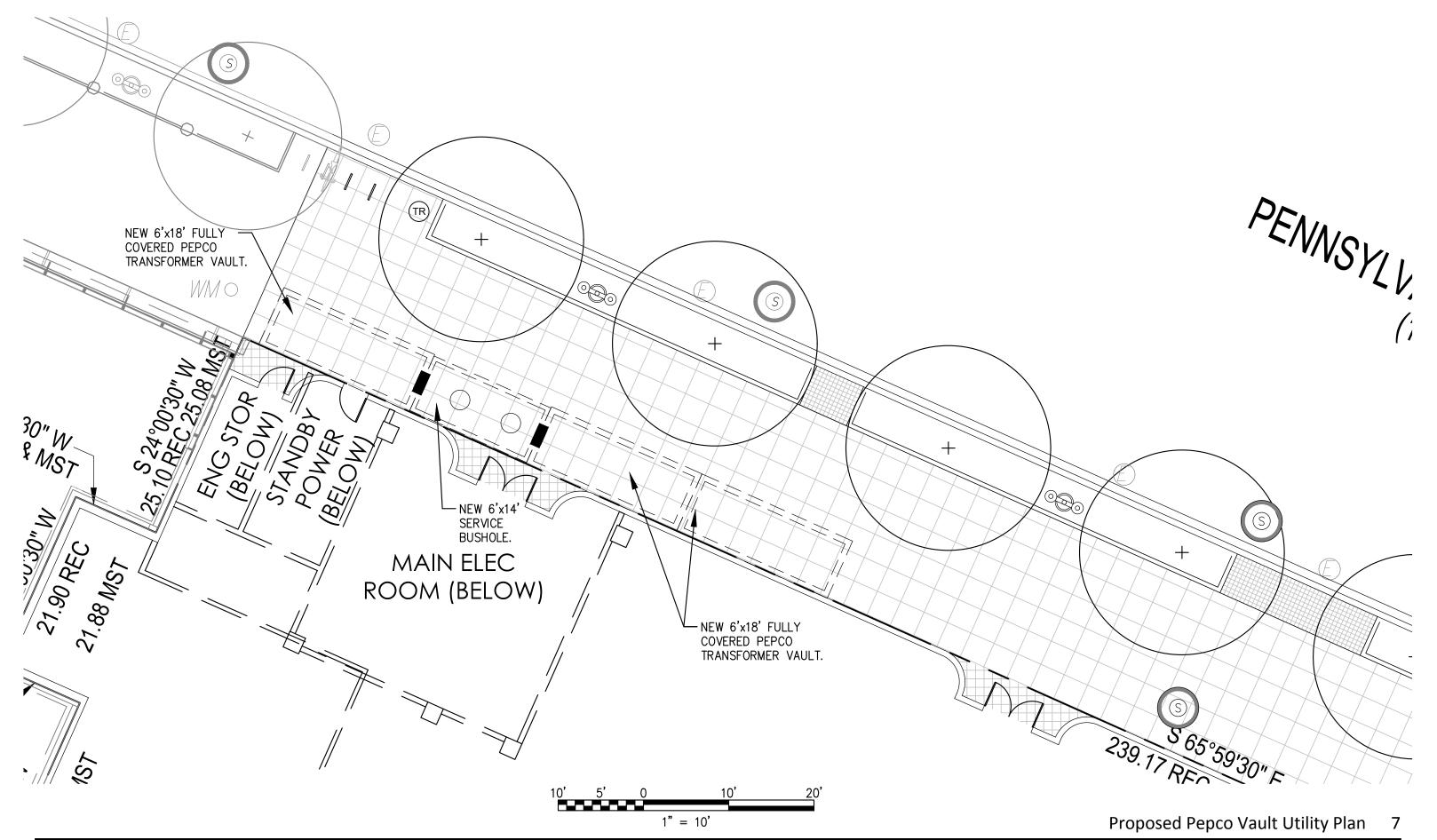


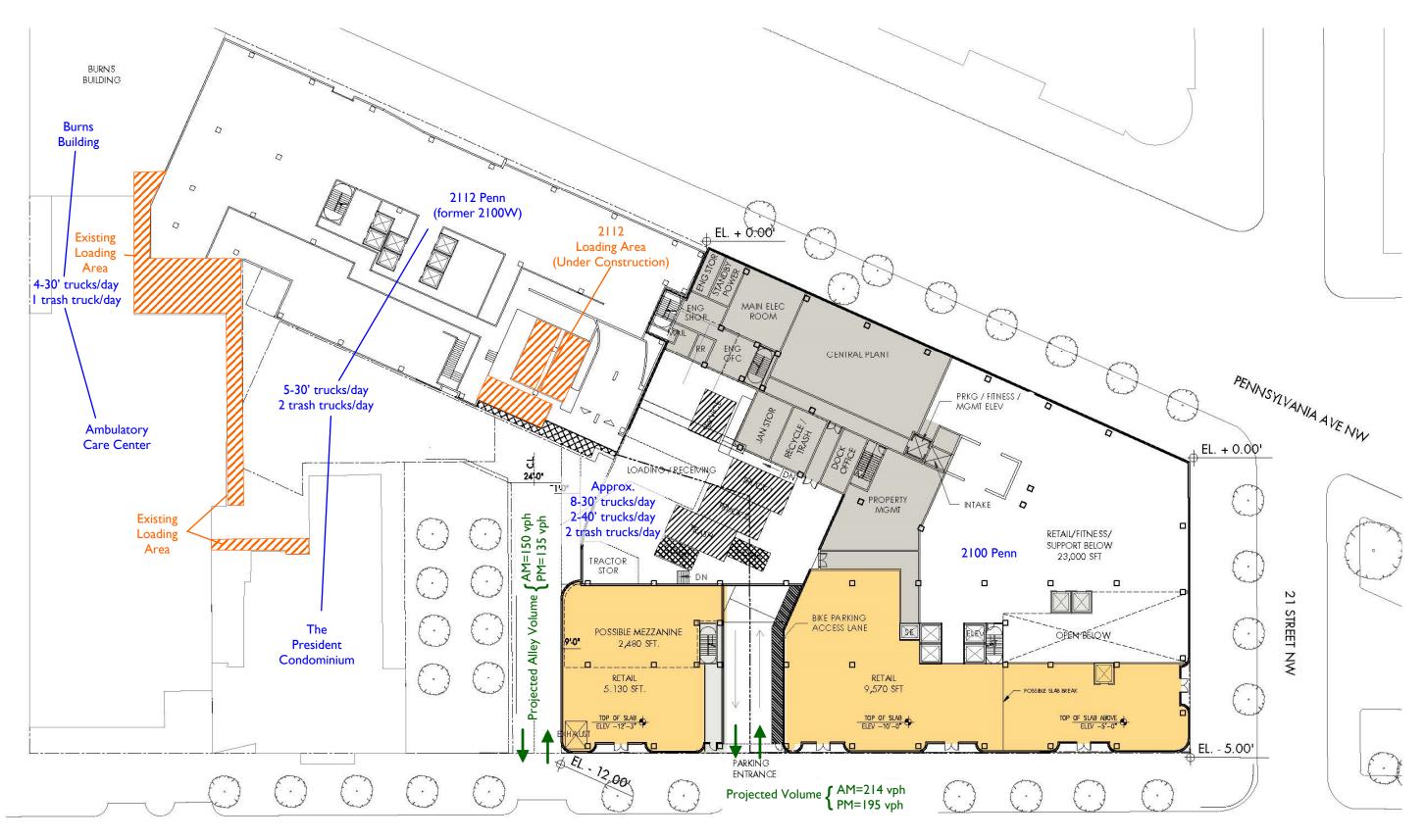
#### **DDOT Driveway Criteria**

Criteria	Proposed
32' between adjacent driveways	75.07′
60' between adjacent intersections	215.47'
24' Max curb cut width	24'
20' Min curb cut width (two-way)	24'
90° Angle	90°
Flush with sidewalk	Yes
Continuous sidewalk material across driveway	Yes
12% Max grade in public space	<12%
Must lie within property it serves	Yes
6' Radii	6'
Min 16' from existing healthy tree	Approx. 103'
Gates/Card Readers at least 20' behind sidewalk	>20'
Min Sight Distance per Design and Engineering Manual <sup>†</sup>	Met

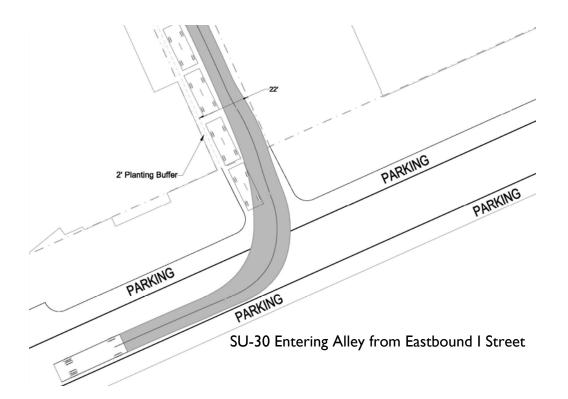
Per §31.2.3.1 of DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual, Sight-distance when exiting a driveway or parking garage requires a minimum 15 feet distance from the edge line of the driveway on a 45-degree angle from the property line or garage exit, as applicable, to the back edge line of the sidewalk. Within this area, no over-height fencing and/or shrubbery over 4 feet tall are allowed, excluding city trees.

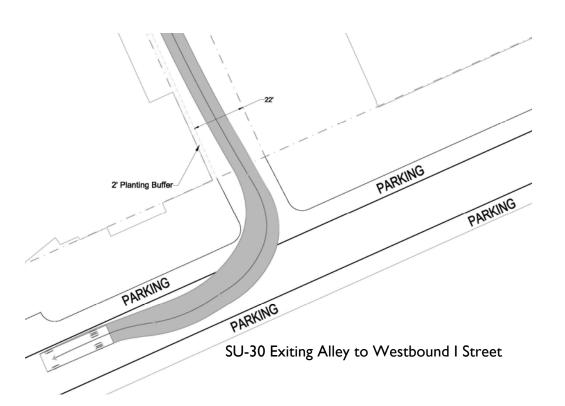


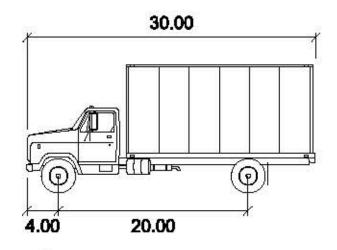








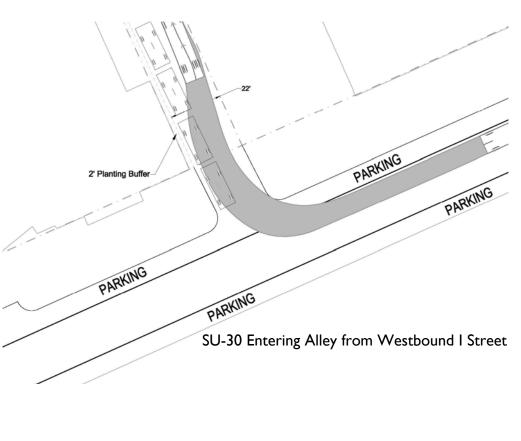


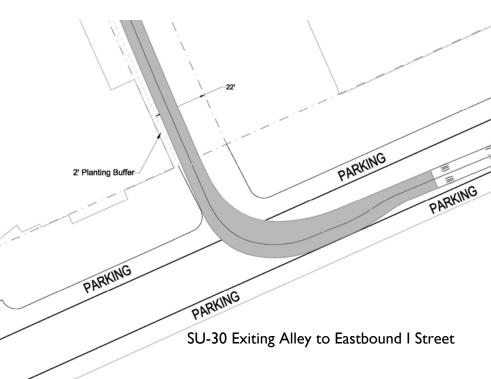


SU	feet
Width Track Lock to Lock Time Steering Angle	: 8.00 : 8.00 : 6.0 : 31.8

NTS

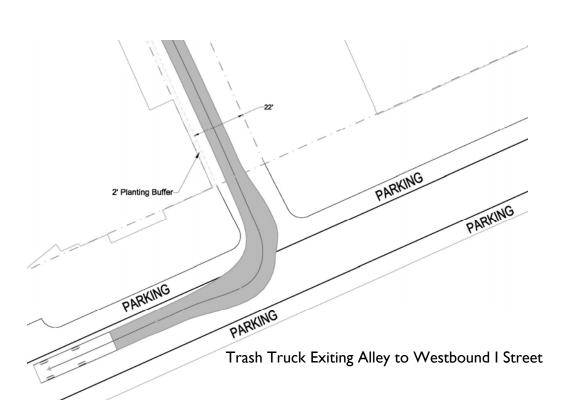
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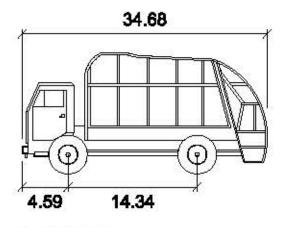




Swept-Area Diagrams for SU-30 Trucks Entering / Exiting the alley via I Street 9





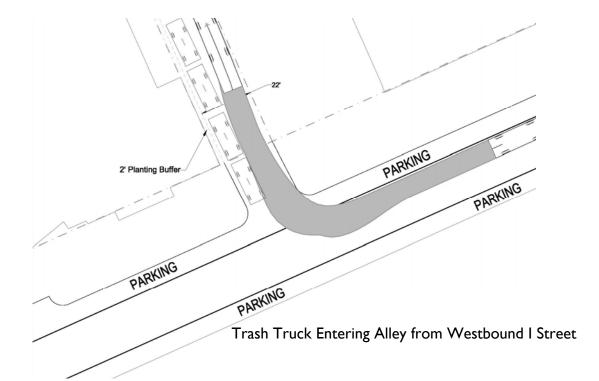


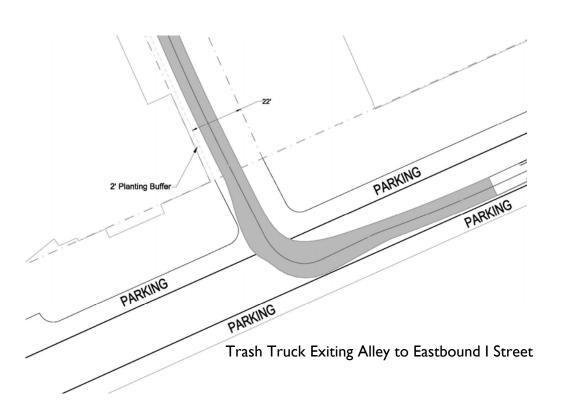
CAMION2	feet

Width : 8.20
Track : 7.84
Lock to Lock Time : 6.0
Steering Angle : 41.8

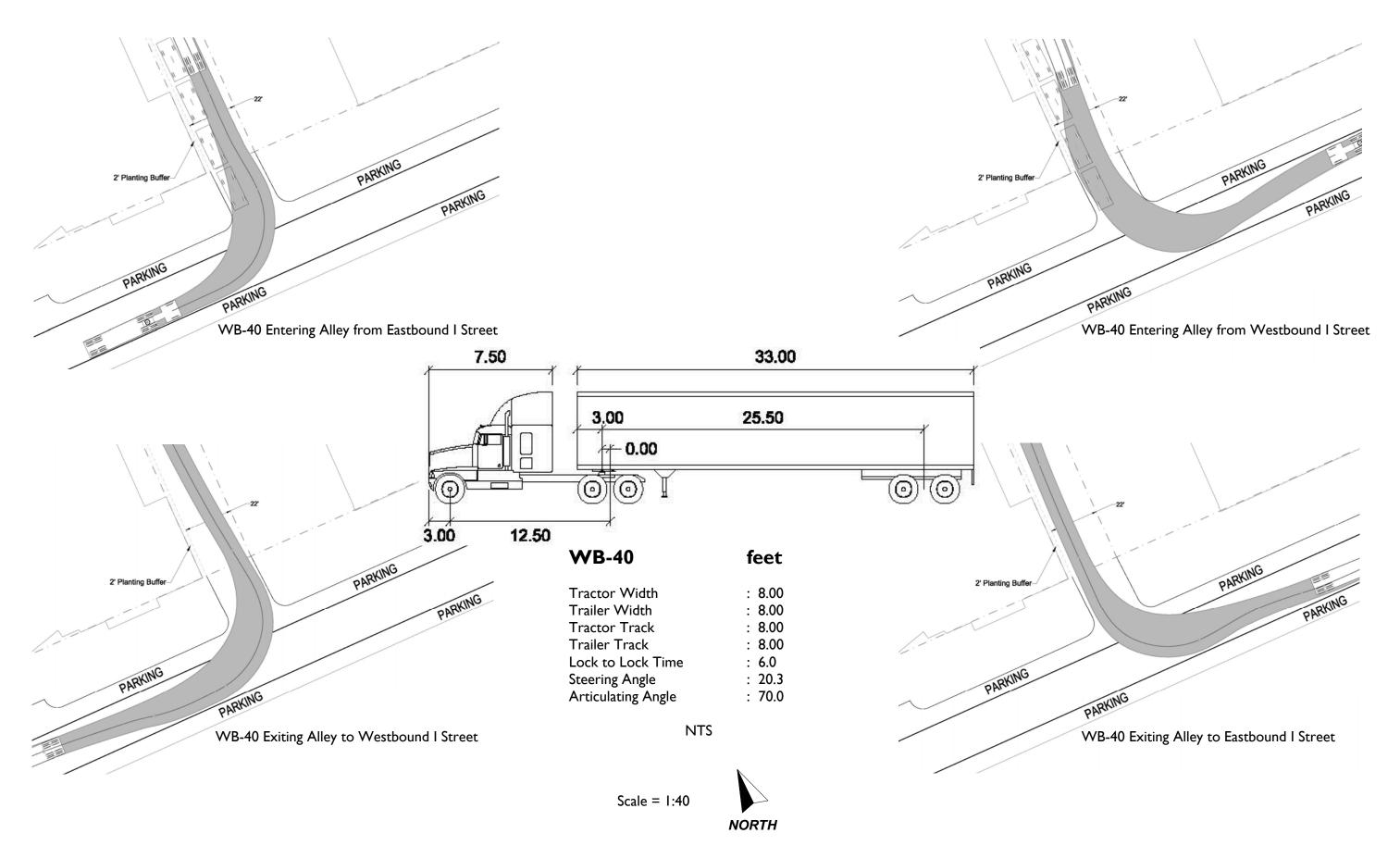
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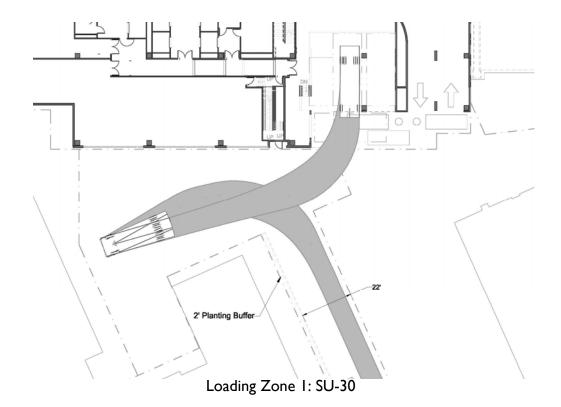


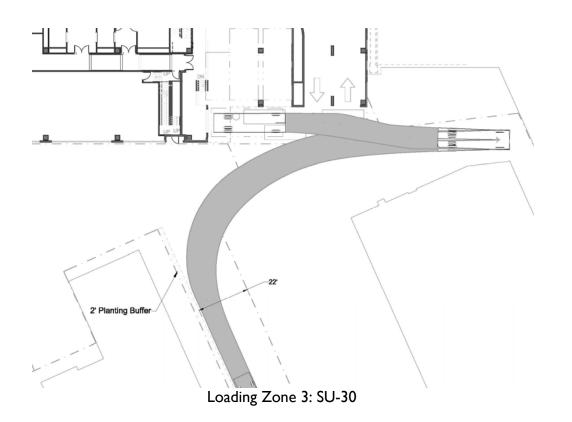


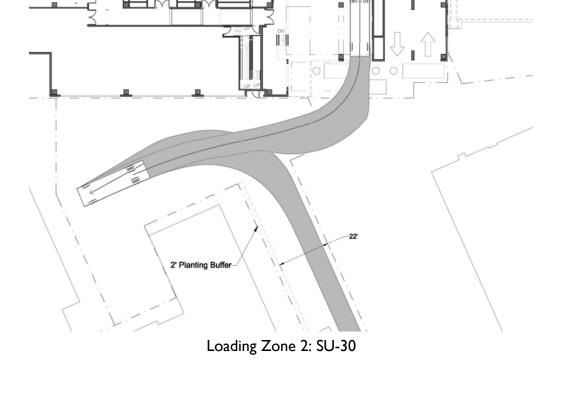
Swept-Area Diagrams for Trash Trucks Entering / Exiting the alley via I Street 10

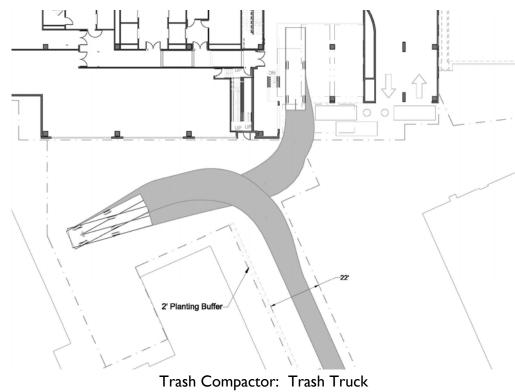


Swept-Area Diagrams for WB-40 Trucks Entering / Exiting the alley via I Street 11





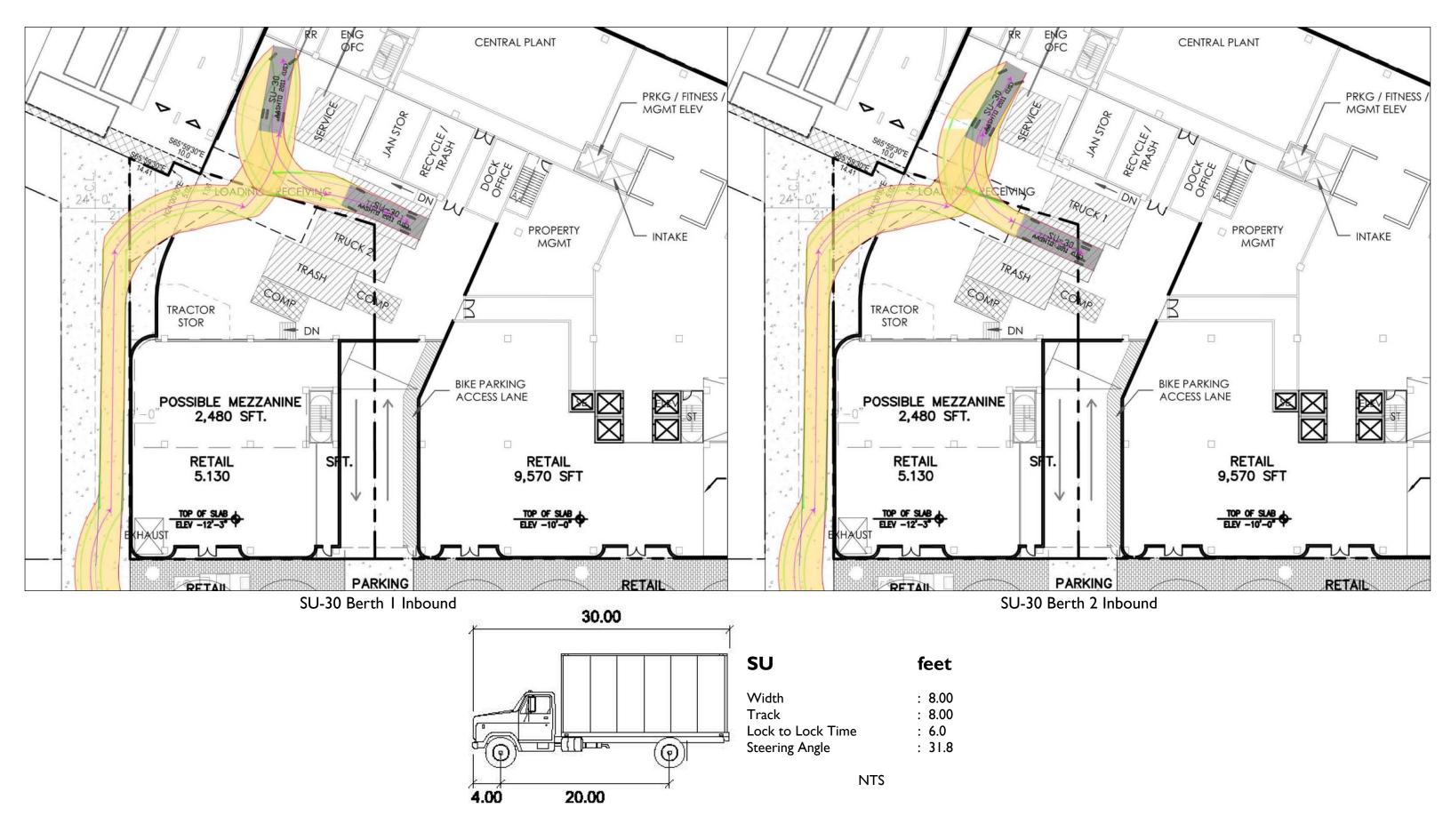


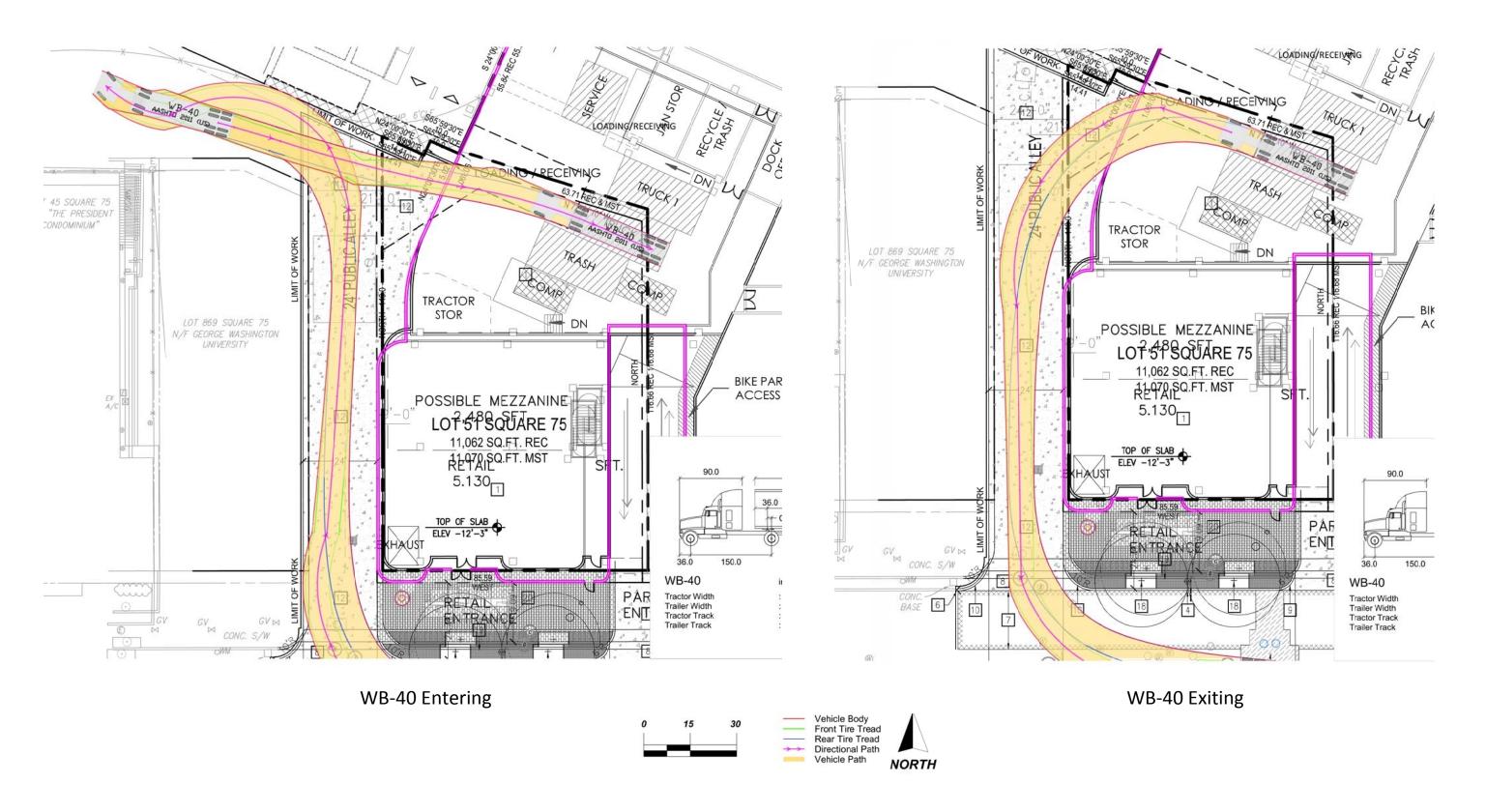


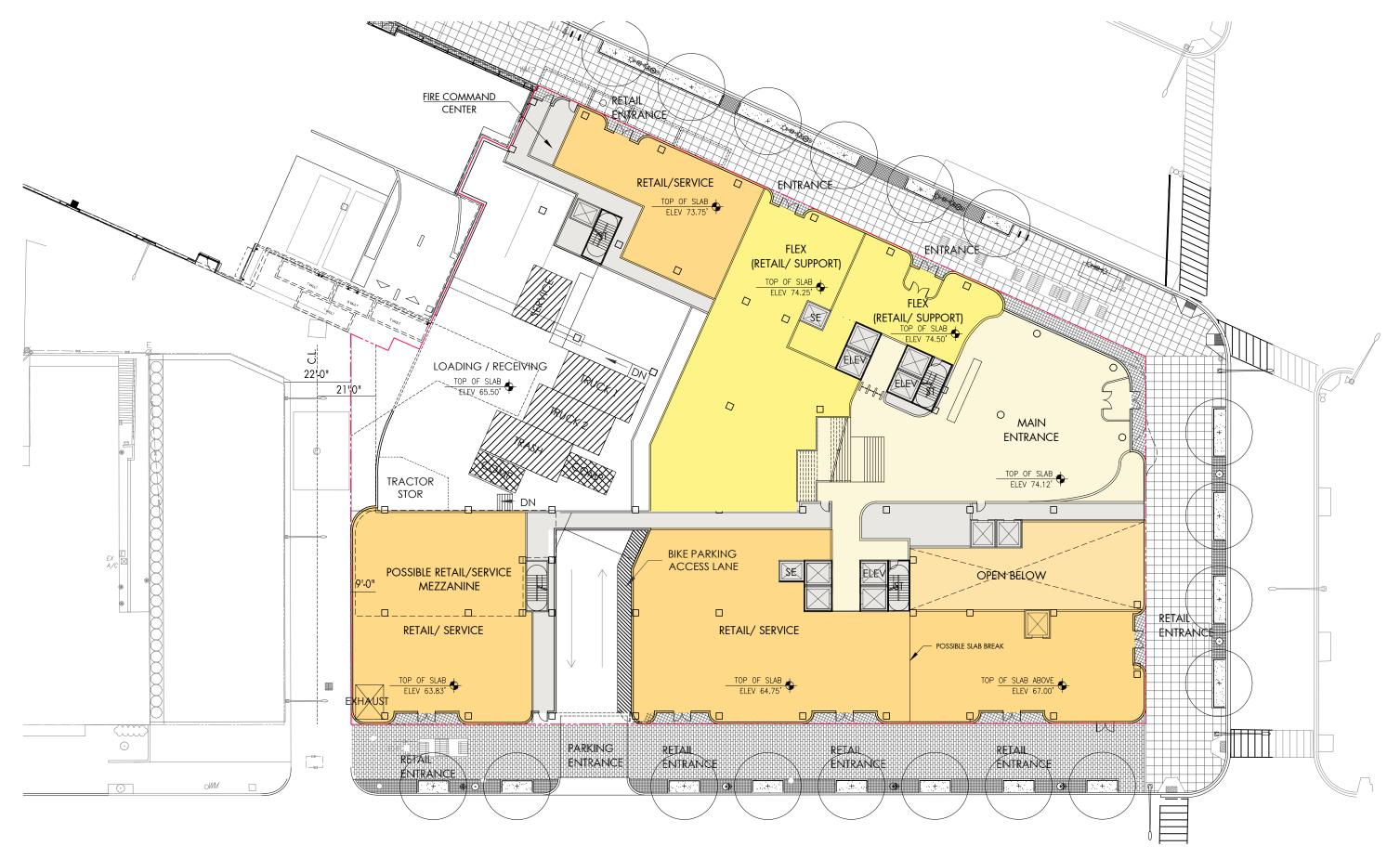


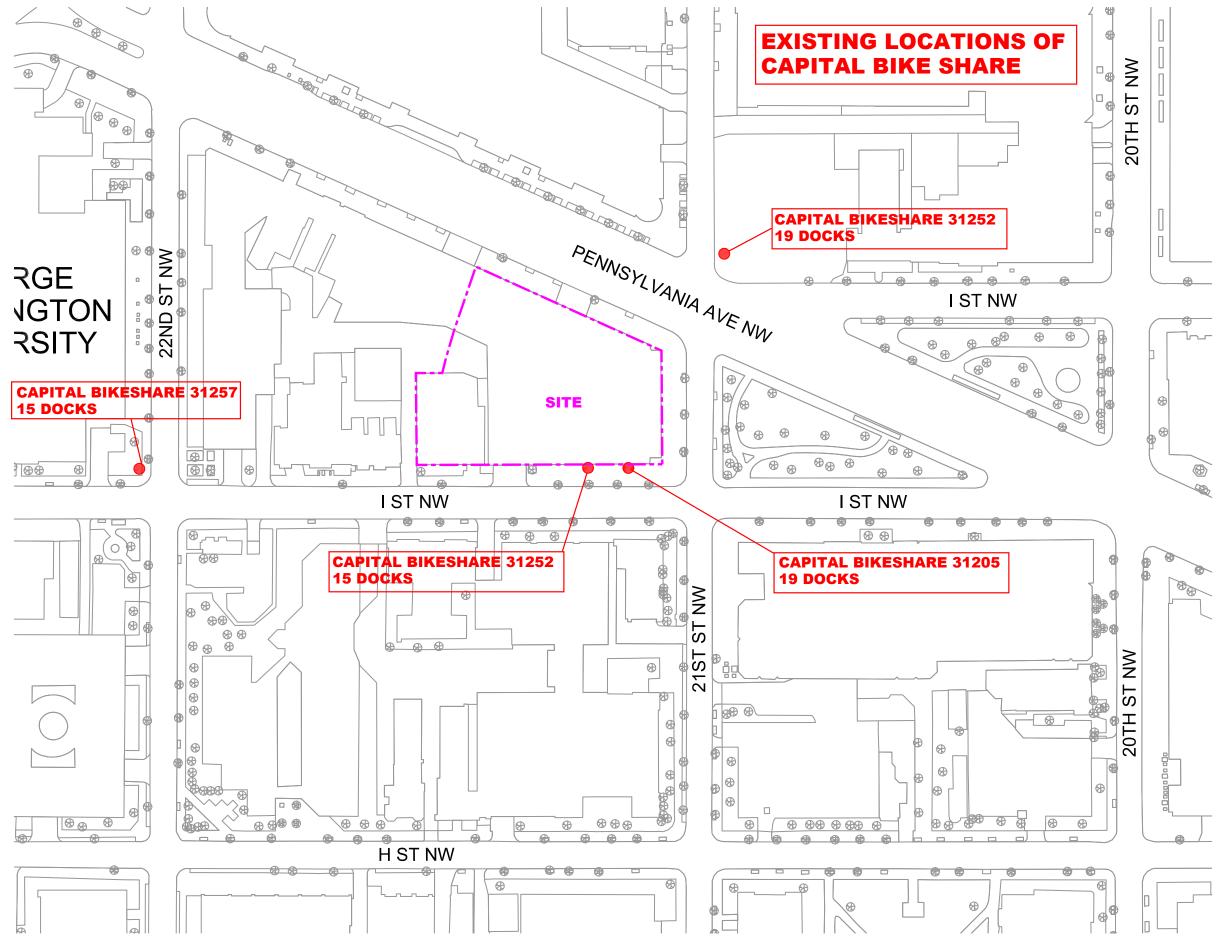
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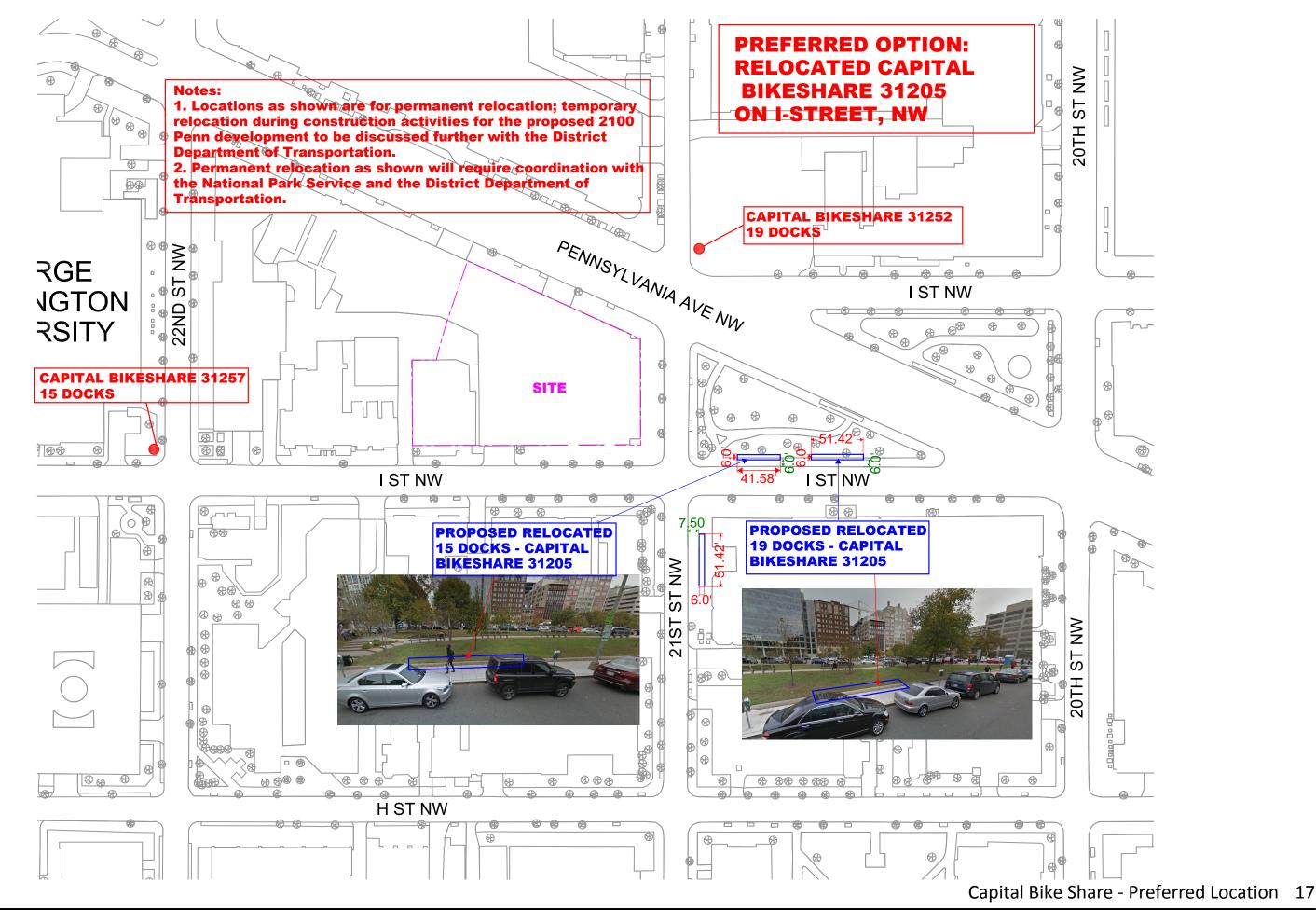
**NORTH** 

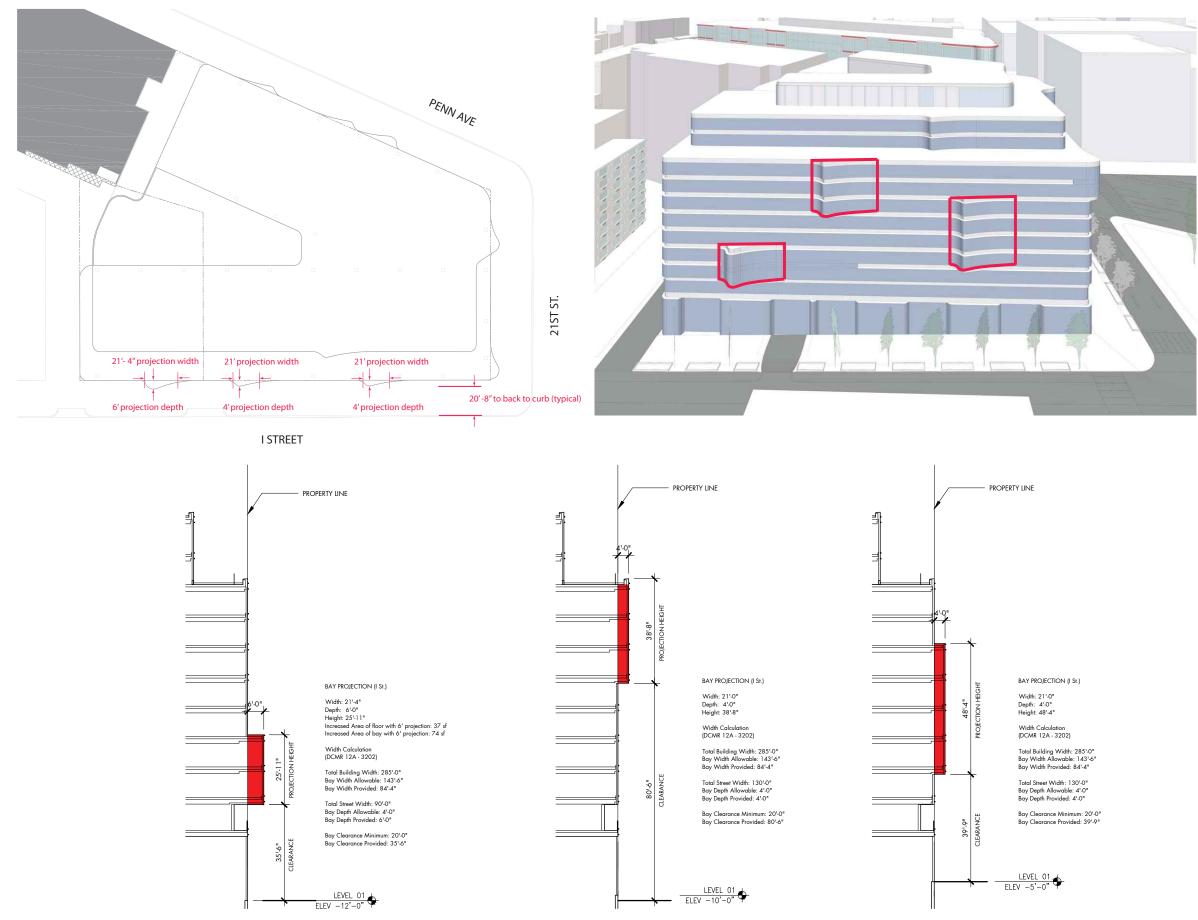


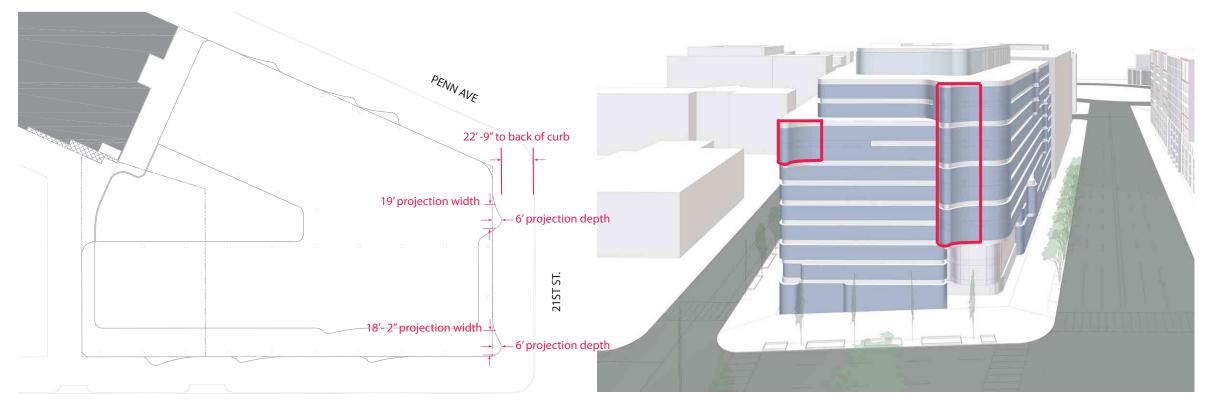




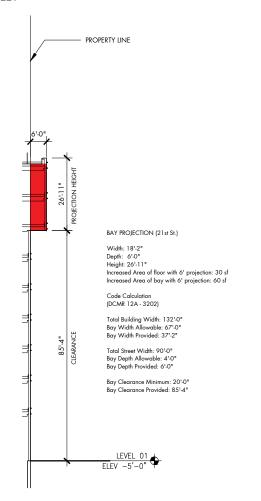


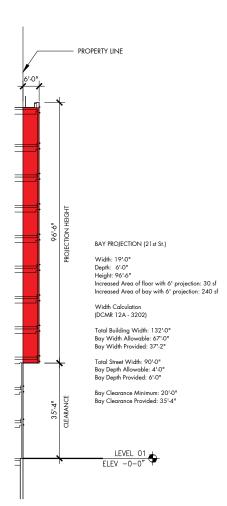




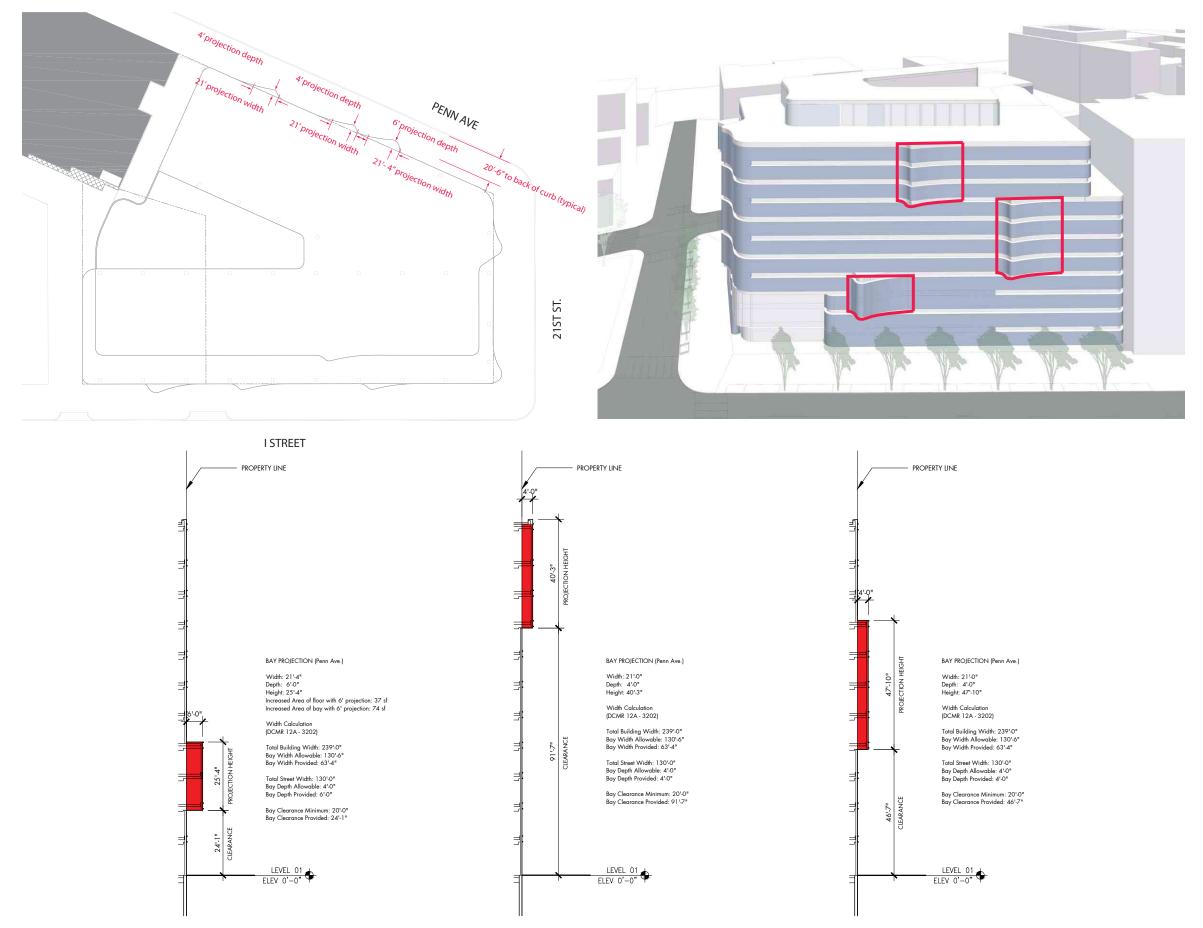


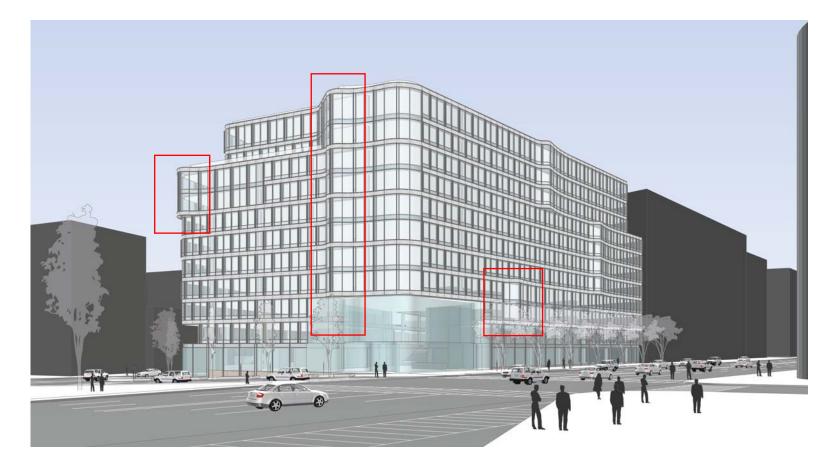




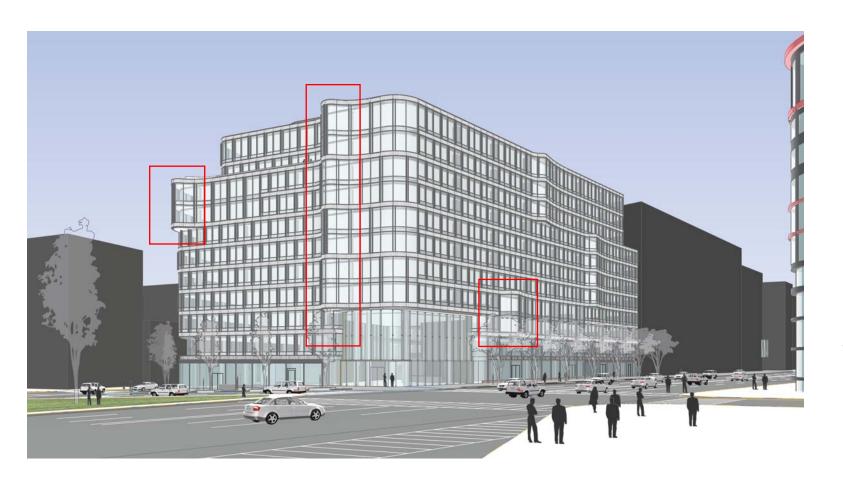


Proposed Building Projections - 21st Street 19



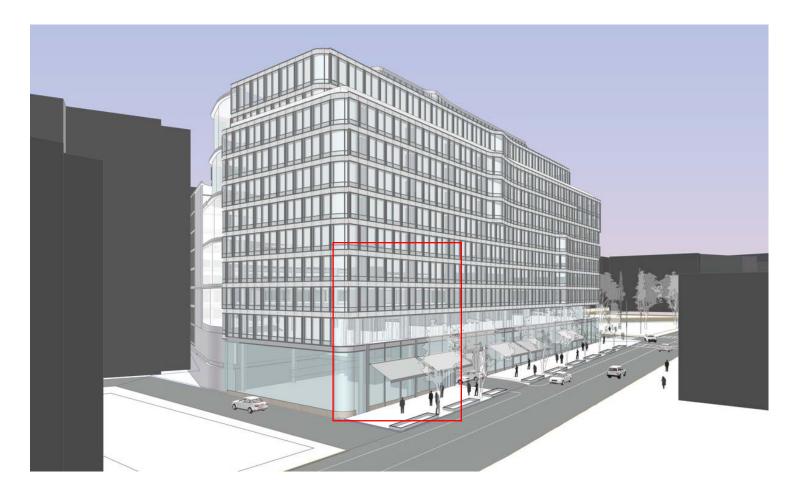


21st Street and Penn Ave 4' Projections before Office of Planning Meeting



21st Street and Penn Ave 4' and 6' Projections of current design.

Projection increased for more expressive design features based on OP's feedback



I Street Facade with 4' Projections before Office of Planning Meeting



I street Facade with 4' and 6' Projections of current design.

Projection increased for more expressive design features based on OP's feedback

# END