



## Beyond L'Enfant: Washington DC's Lesser Known Open Space Legacy

### Public "Parking", Building Projections, and the Highway Plan

APA-NCAC Conference  
*September 13, 2019*



*The DC Office of Planning*





skyline



iconic buildings



public space



projections



**Public “Parking”**



## The Ideal

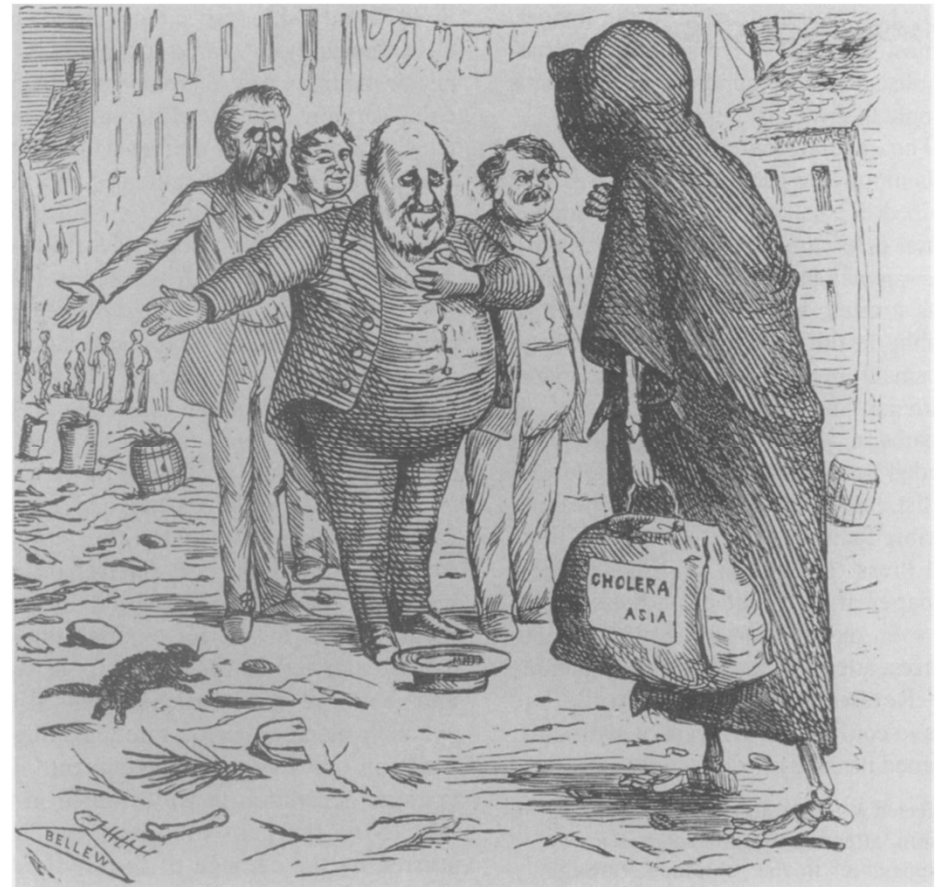


"West Front of the Capitol of the United States", 1824, by Charles Burton in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century Urban Life



Robert Cruikshank, "Random Shots (No 2)  
A Cholera Doctor," circa 1832



Frank Bellows, "Our Honored Guest," Harper's Weekly  
September 2, 1871

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century Urban Life



Frank Leslie, Newspaper Illustration  
Dead Rabbits Riot, Bayard Street, NYC, 1857

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century Urban Life



F Street, NW - 1865

## Public “Parking”



K Street NW – circa 1880

“. . . the corporation of the city of Washington be, and hereby authorized to set apart from time to time, as parks, to be adorned with shade-trees, walks, and enclosed with curbstones, not exceeding one half of the width of any and all avenues and streets in the said city of Washington, leaving a roadway of not less than thirty-five feet in width in the centre of said avenues and streets, or two such roadways on each side of the park in the centre of the same . . . “

- Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1870

## Parking Act



11<sup>th</sup> and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE – circa. 1920



Louisiana Avenue, NW - 1925

## Public Parking



### Title 24: Public Space and Safety

102.8 For purposes of this section, "**public parking**" means that area of public space devoted to open space, greenery, parks, or parking that lies between the property line . . . and the edge of the actual or planned sidewalk that is nearer to the property line . . ."

## Public Parking



Massachusetts Avenue NW

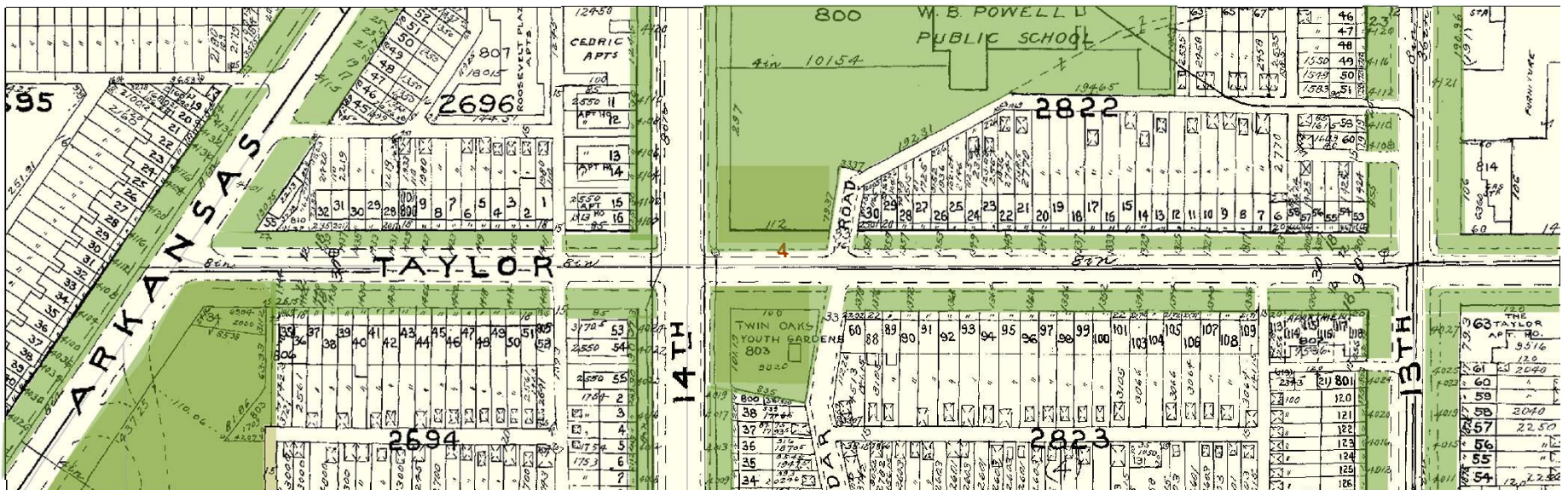
“Where streets and avenues crossed and re-crossed their long vistas of shadeless dust, now plat on plat of restful grass “park” the city from end to end.”

- Mary Clemmer Ames, 1873

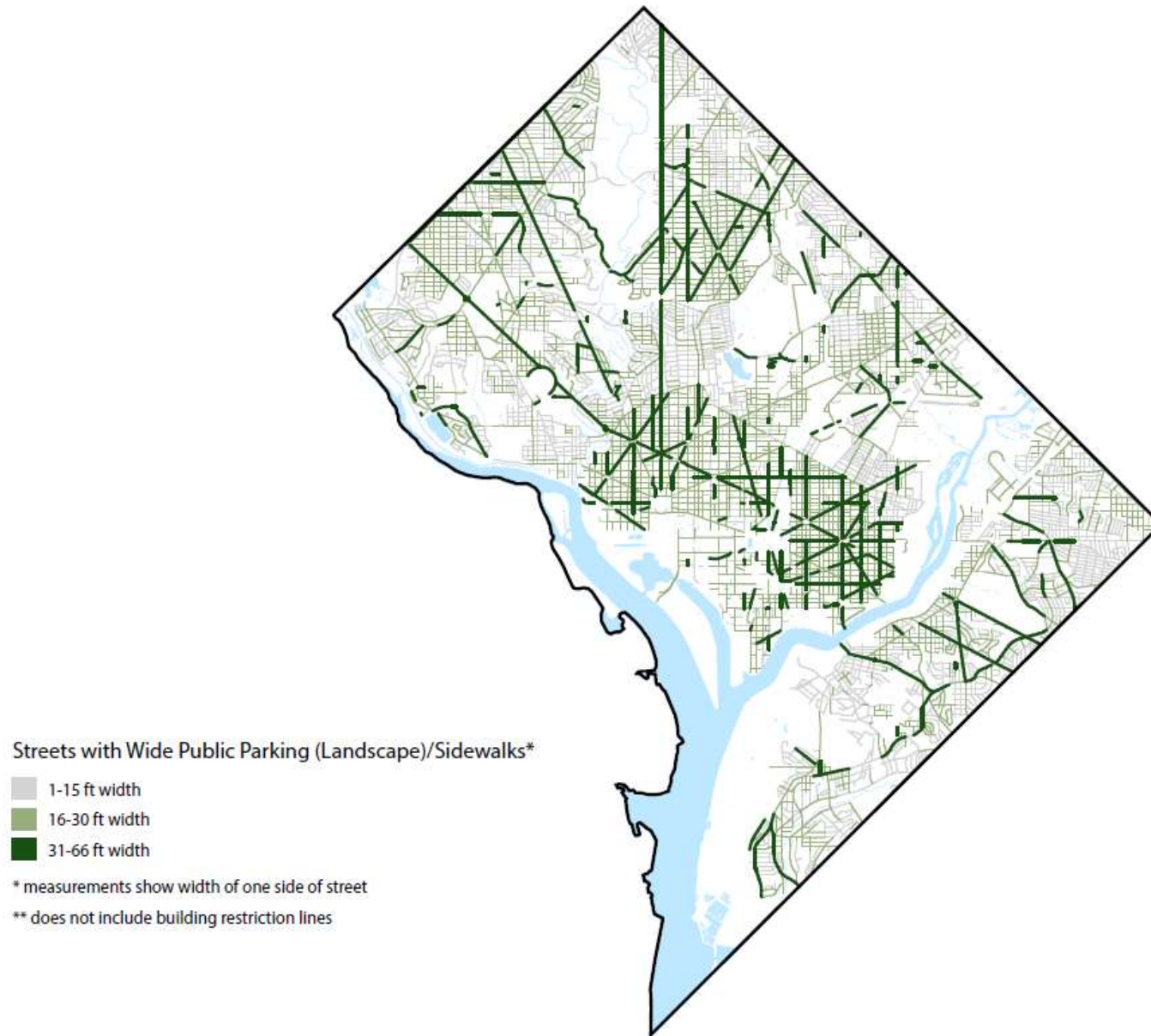
# DC's Park System



# Public Parking – the green space that holds the city together



# The Parking System



# Washington, DC's Green Legacy



## DCMR Title 24: Public Space and Safety

### Landscaping and Paving

- Hedges
- Sodding or Beautifying with Flowers (allowed)
- Deposits of Yard Waste (not allowed)
- Change of Grade
- Lead Walk Widths (maximum 6')
- Paving

### Fences and Walls

- Fence Pedestals
- Wooden Fences (Colonial design only)
- Metal Fences (no sharp-pointed prongs)
- Wickets
- Gate Swings
- Walls “of an approved type”



# Building Projections

# Projections



Washington, DC



Boston



San Francisco



Philadelphia

## Projections in other US cities

<i>City</i>	<i>Below Grade</i>	<i>Above Grade</i>	<i>Steps (example)</i>
Washington, DC	Areaways, Vaults, Tunnels	Awnings, Canopies, Marquees, Port Cocheres, Steps, Ramps, Porches, Show Windows, Bay Windows, Oriel Windows, Towers, Colonnades, Market Sheds, Loading Platforms and Scales	Up to 10'
Indianapolis, IN	--	--	--
Los Angeles, CA	--	Awnings, Canopies, Marquees	--
Seattle, WA	Areaways	Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees	--
Philadelphia, PA	Vaults	Oriel Windows, "Bulk" Window, Balconies, Awnings, Canopies, Marquees, Wheelchair Elevators	--
New York, NY	Areaways, Vaults, Tunnels	Balconies, Steps, Marquees (ramps allowed on historic buildings being updated)	Up to 18"

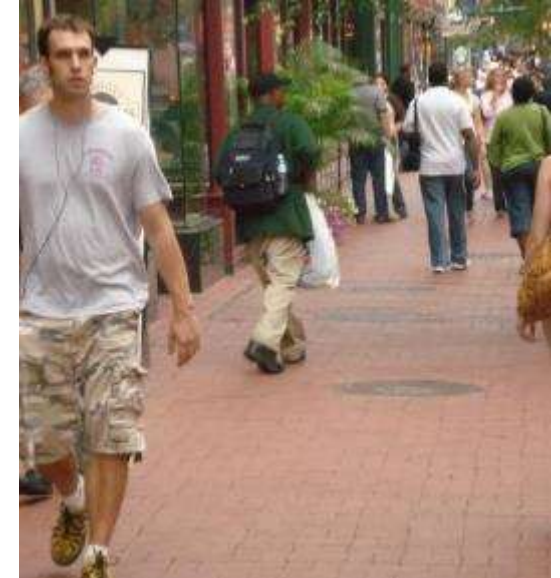
Above Grade: Bay Windows, Oriel Windows, Show Windows, Towers , Porches, and Balconies



## Above Grade: Steps, Ramps, Canopies, Awnings, Marquees, and Colonnades



## Below Grade: Areaways and Vaults



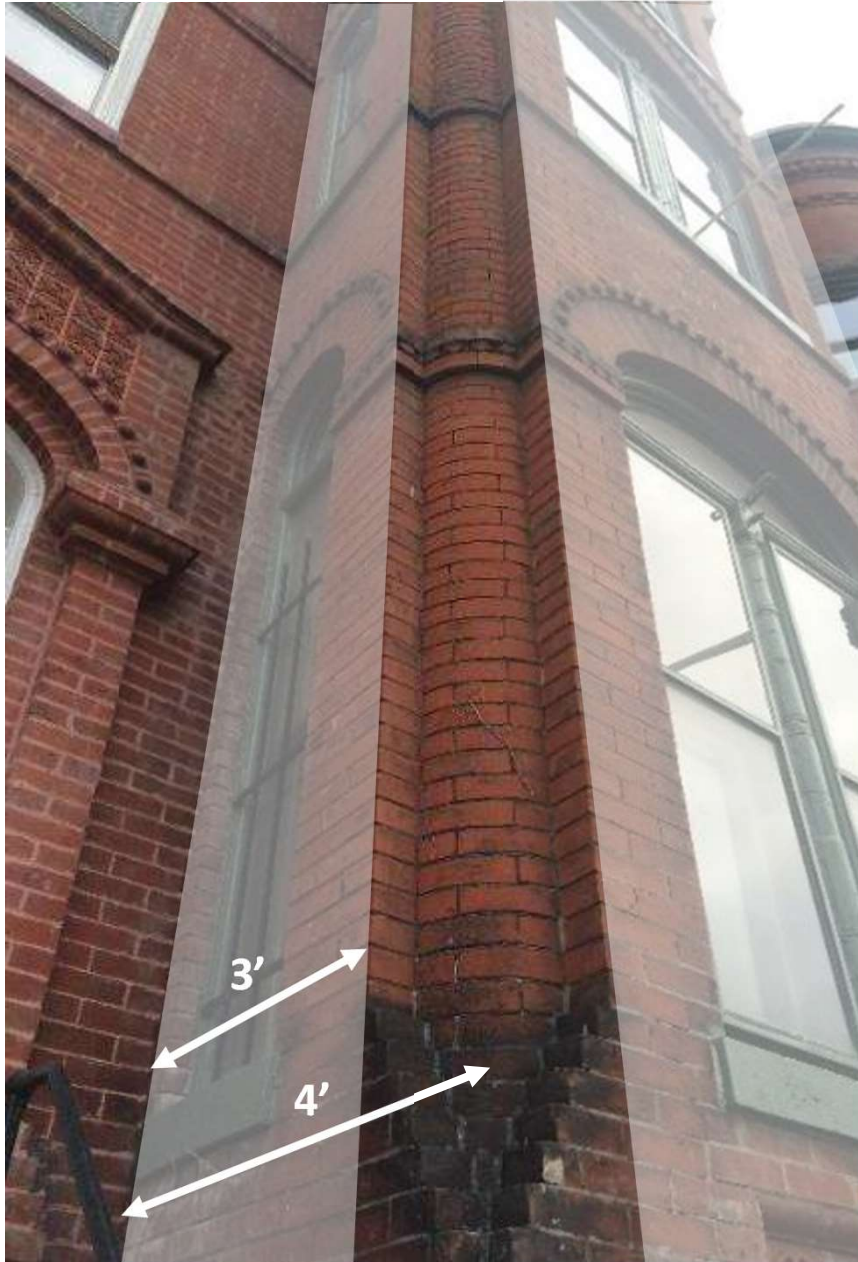
## Design Goals



## Design Goals



## Design Goals



## Design Goals



## Design Goals



Secondary to the Main Facade



Verticality



Break Down Mass

## Design Goals

Minimum clearances to curb applies to all projections and is based on street width:

<i>40' to less than 50'</i>	<i>6'</i>
<i>50' to less than 60'</i>	<i>8'</i>
<i>60 to and including 80'</i>	<i>10'</i>
<i>80' to and including 90'</i>	<i>12'</i>
<i>More than 90'</i>	<i>15'</i>

All projections prohibited on certain streets.

No projections allowed on street less than 60' in width unless otherwise specified (ie. steps, water tables, sills, etc.).



# Design Goals

Projection amounts varies depending on zoning, street width, and “parking”

District of Columbia Building Code Schedule of Limitations and Provisions Relative to Projections and Encroachments Beyond Building Lines  
As adopted by the Council of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, Title 24, Building Code, Chapter 2401 Encroachments and Projections, Part of Year

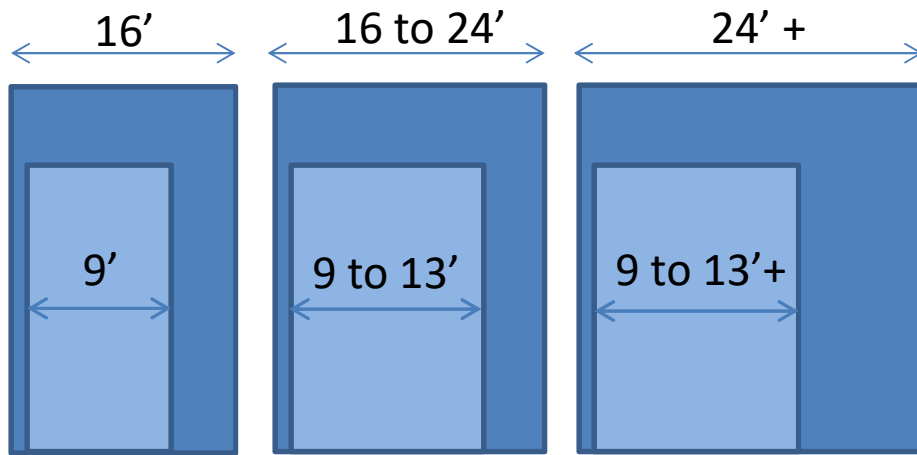
Height of Projection	Width of Projection	Width of Projection	Schedule of Limitations and Provisions										REMARKS/NOTE					
			C, C-M, and M Zones					R and SP Zones					On All Streets	On Parked Streets	On Unparked Streets	On All Streets	On Parked Streets	On Unparked Streets
			All Streets	When parking is 20' or more wide	More than 70' wide	70' and less to 60' wide	60' and less wide	All Streets	When parking is 20' or more wide	More than 70' wide	70' and less to 60' wide	60' and less wide						
Unlimited above and below grade	Unlimited	Unlimited	4'	7'	6 1/2'	6'	.....	4'	4'	4'	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Designation of Projection	Height of Projections	Width of Projections	Distance of Projections Outward from Building Line (to be measured from line of first story)															
			C, C-M, and M Zones	R and SP Zones					R and SP Zones									
				All Streets	On Parked Streets					On Unparked Streets								
			All Streets	When parking is 20' or more wide	More than 70' wide	70' and less to 60' wide	60' and less wide	More than 80'	80' and less to 70' wide	70' and less to 60' wide	60' and less to 45' wide	45' and less to 40' wide						
Areaways	Limited to surface of adjacent grade	Unlimited	4'	7'	6 1/2'	6'	.....	4'	4'	4'	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section	Section
Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6	Section 7	Section 8	Section 9	Section 10	Section 11	Section 12	Section 13	Section 14	Section 15	Section 16	Section 17	Section 18	Section 19	Section 20	Section 21

# Design Goals

Widths and number of bay windows are determined by width of the building facade



$$(FW - 16) \times .5 + 9$$

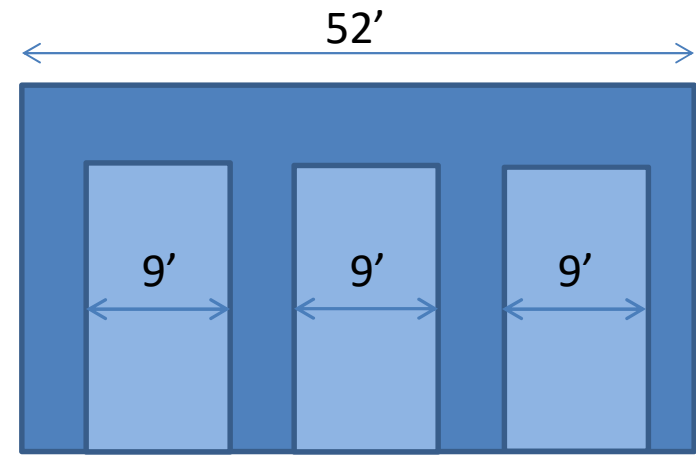
$$(FW - 24) \times .1666 + 13$$

## SINGLE PROJECTIONS

**Facades 16' Wide**  
Minimum width for bay window projection; single projection of 9' allowed

**Facades 16 to 24' Wide**  
Increase 6" for every foot of increase over 16' and up to 24'

**Facades Over 24' Wide**  
Increase 2" for every foot of increase over 24'



Single  
 $(FW - 24) \times .1666 + 13$

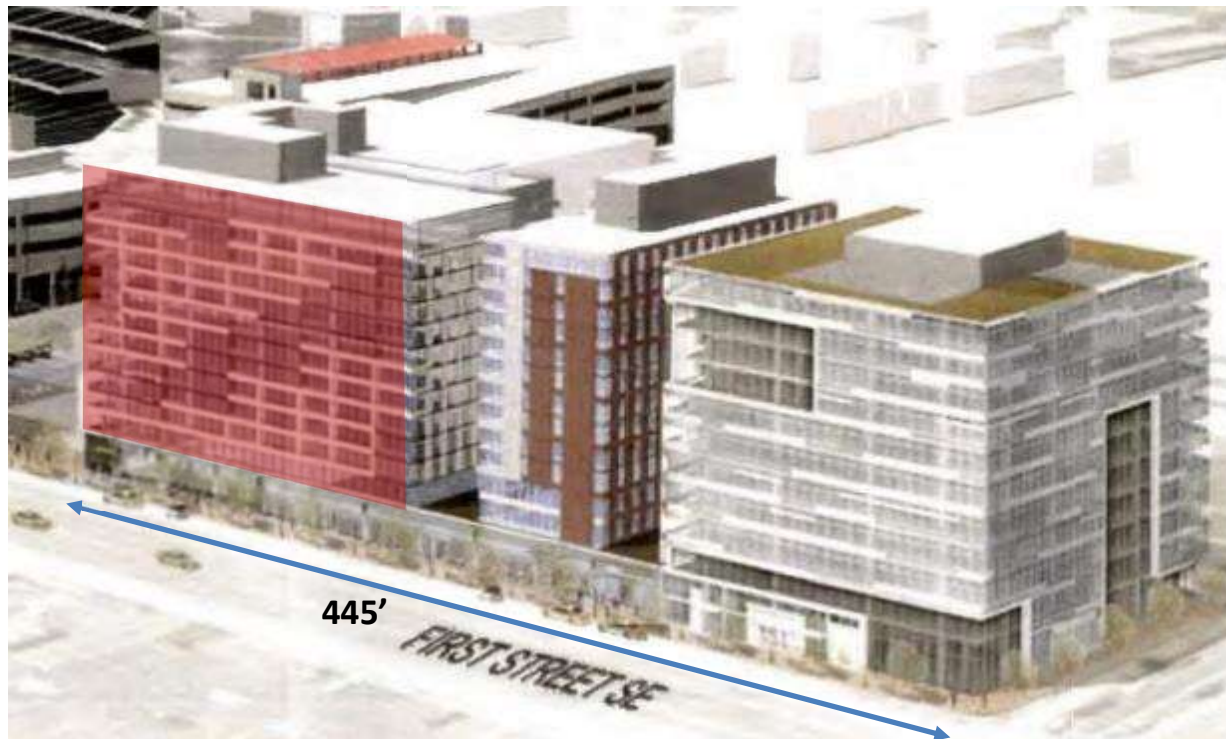
Multiple Total  
 $(FW - 24) \times .5 + 13$

## MULTIPLE PROJECTIONS

**Facades 24' Wide**  
Minimum width for multiple bay window projection

**Facades Over 24' Wide**  
Total width of all projections to increase 6" for every foot over 24'

## Design Goals



<u>Method One</u>	
Building Width	445'
Single Projection	83'
Multiple Projection	223'

# Design Goals



## Method One

Building Width	445'
Single Projection	83'
Multiple Projection	223'

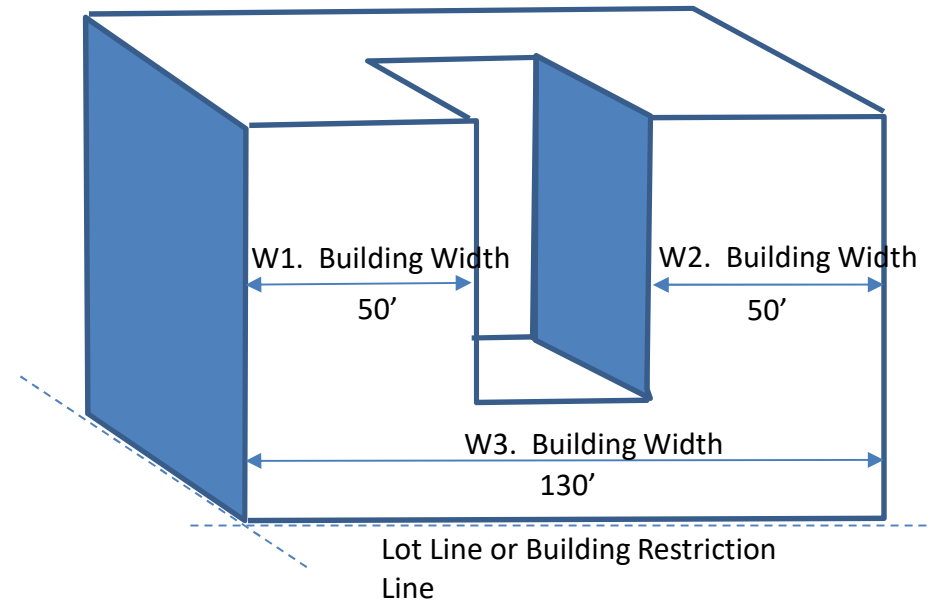
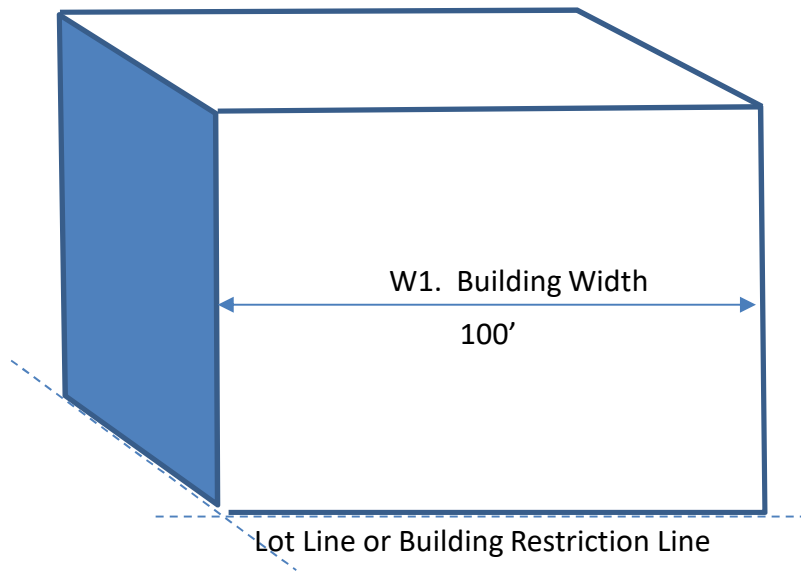
## Method Two

Building Width	173'
Single Projection	37'
Multiple Projection	87'

Building Width	59'
Single Projection	18'
Multiple Projection	30'

Building Width	137'
Single Projection	31'
Multiple Projection	69'

## Calculating building width



## Design Goals

Regulations include minimum 9' width for bay, oriel, and show windows; maximum width based on width of façade.

Minimum façade width for bay, oriel, and show windows is 16'.



## Design Goals

Balconies and porches unlimited in width unless connected to bay, oriel, or show windows.



# The Full Effect

Projections



Fences

Grade

Hedges

Lead Walks

Beautification

# The Full Effect

Projections



Retaining Walls

Grade

Hedges

Lead Walks

Beautification



# Highway Plan



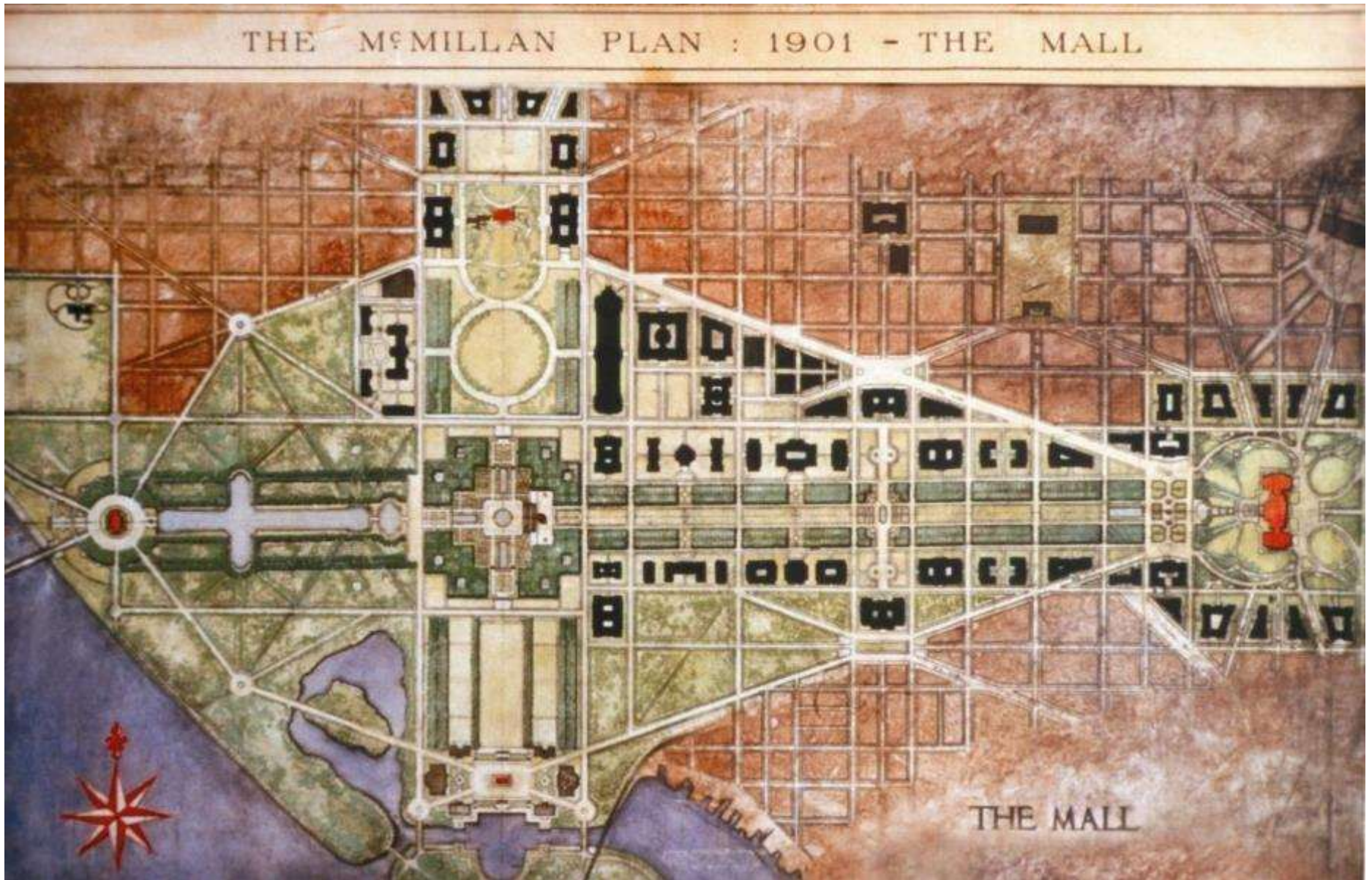
## What is a “Highway”?

A **highway** is any public or private road or other public way on land. It is used for major roads, but also includes other public roads and public tracks.

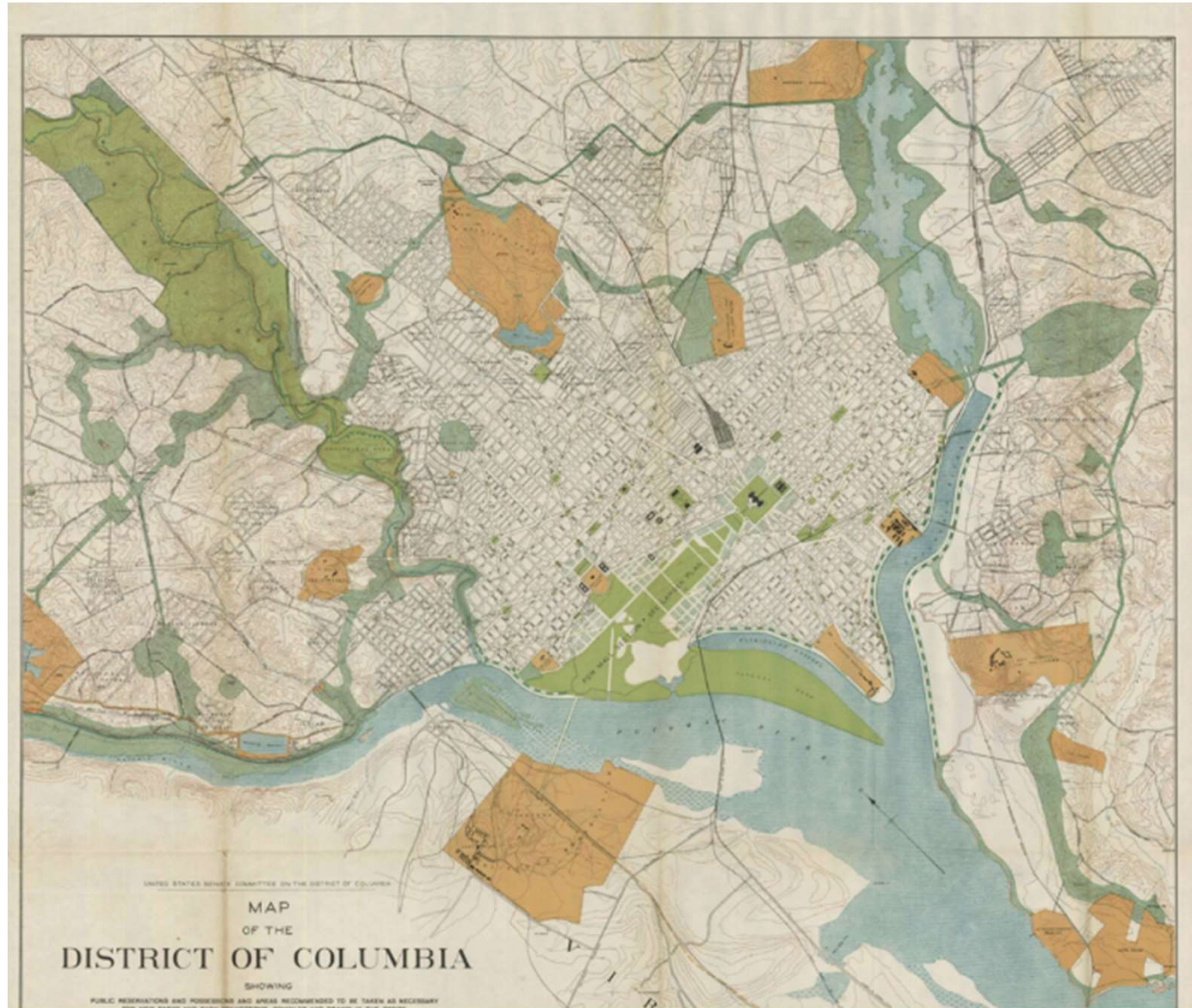
It is *not* an equivalent term to **controlled-access highway**.

In American law, the word "highway" is sometimes used to denote any public way used for travel, whether a "**road, street, and parkway**".

# The McMillan Plan



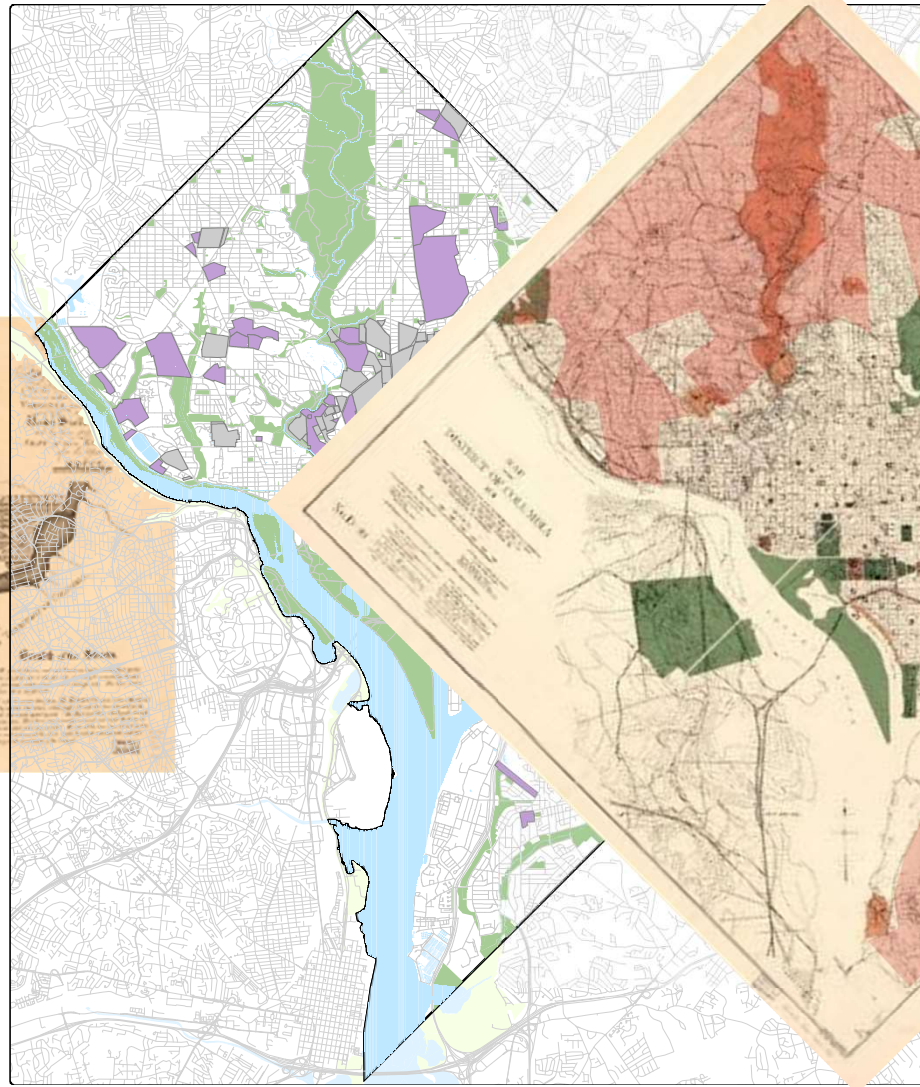
# The McMillan Plan



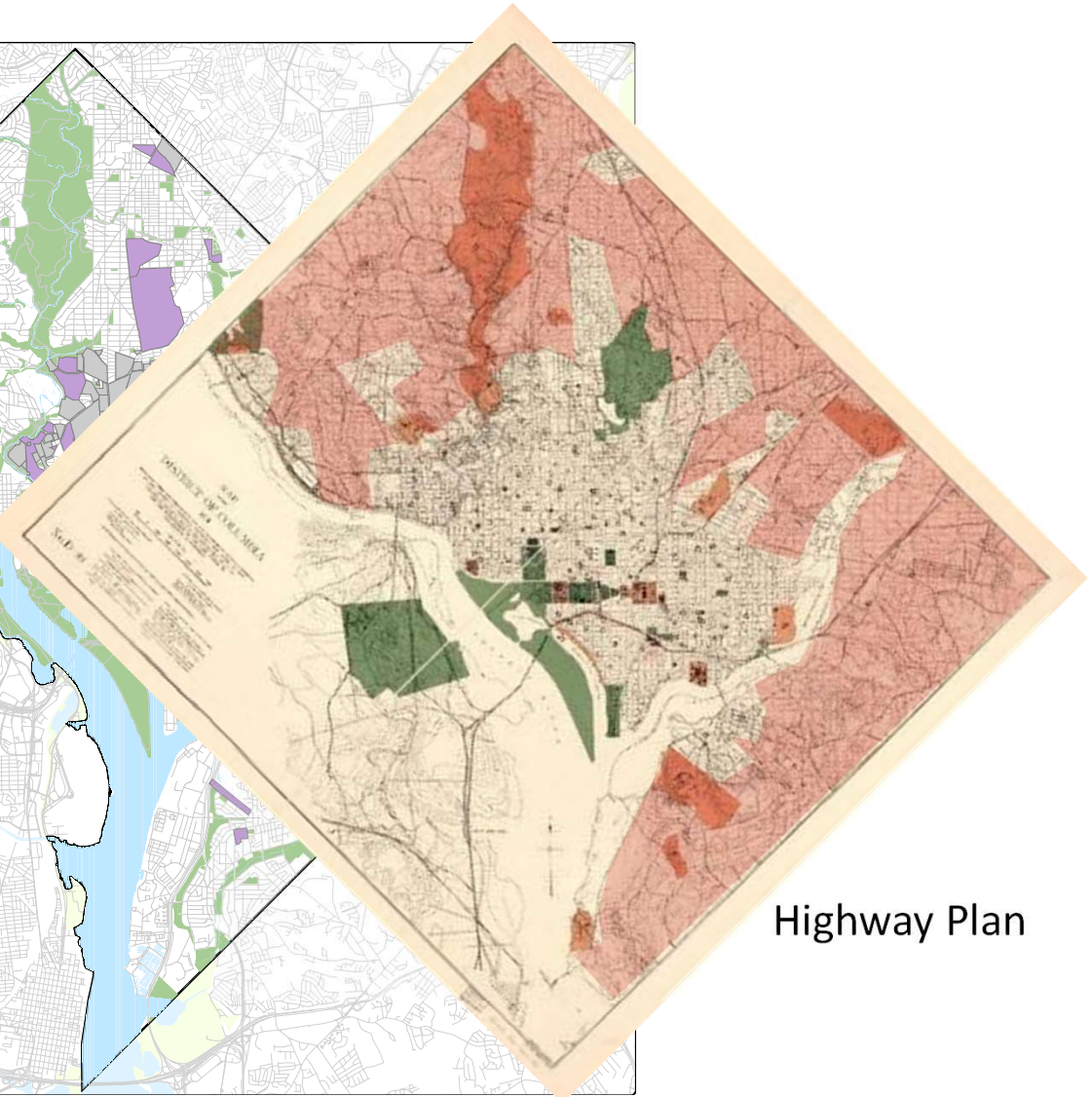
# Street Systems



L'Enfant Plan



Unregulated Subdivisions

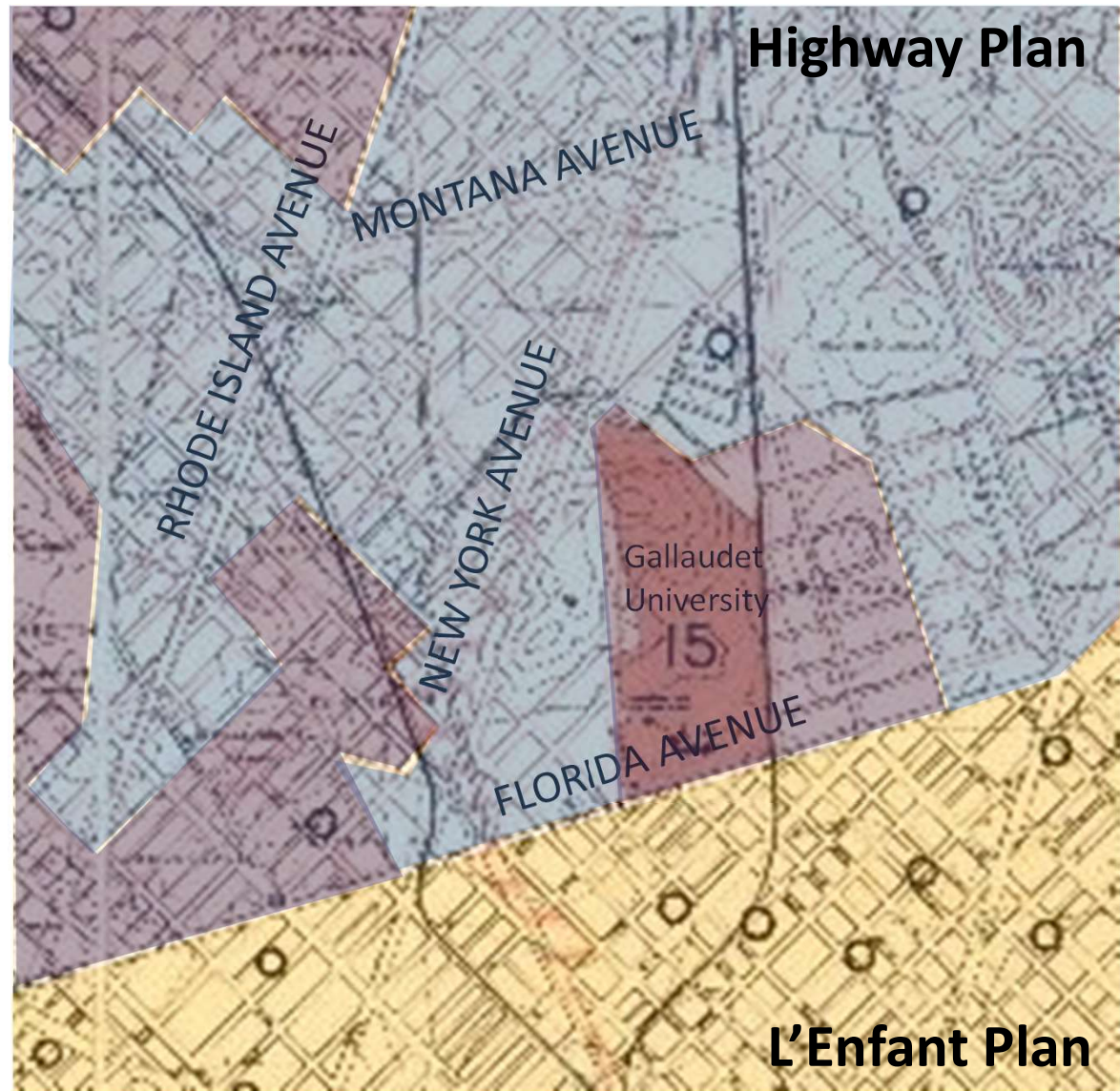


Highway Plan

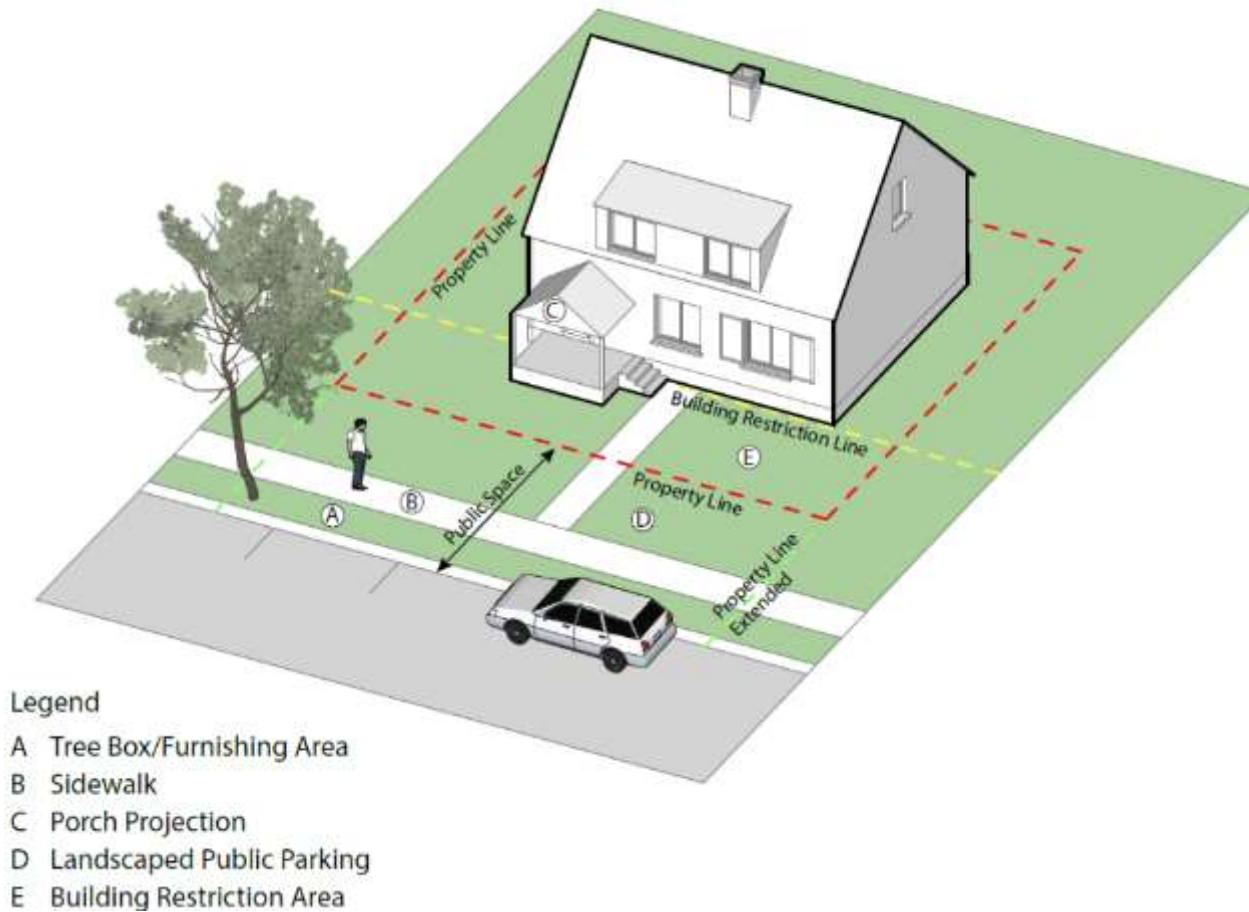
# Highway Plan

## Design Principals

1. Draw upon natural scenery
2. Respond to existing context
3. Connect parks with parkways
4. Extend parks into neighborhoods
5. Big idea takes precedence



## Building Restriction Lines

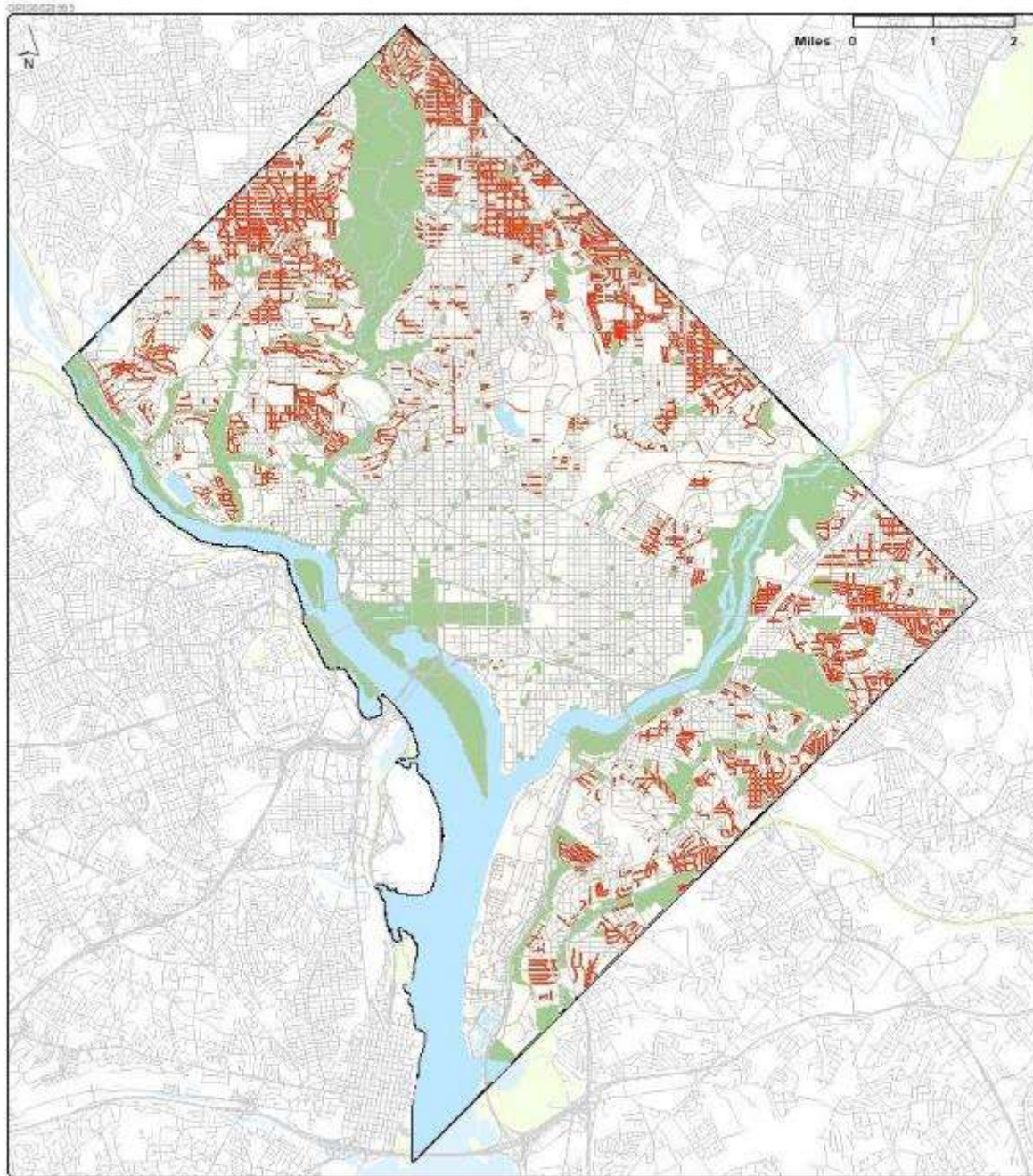


### DC Official Code - Title 9. Transportation Systems

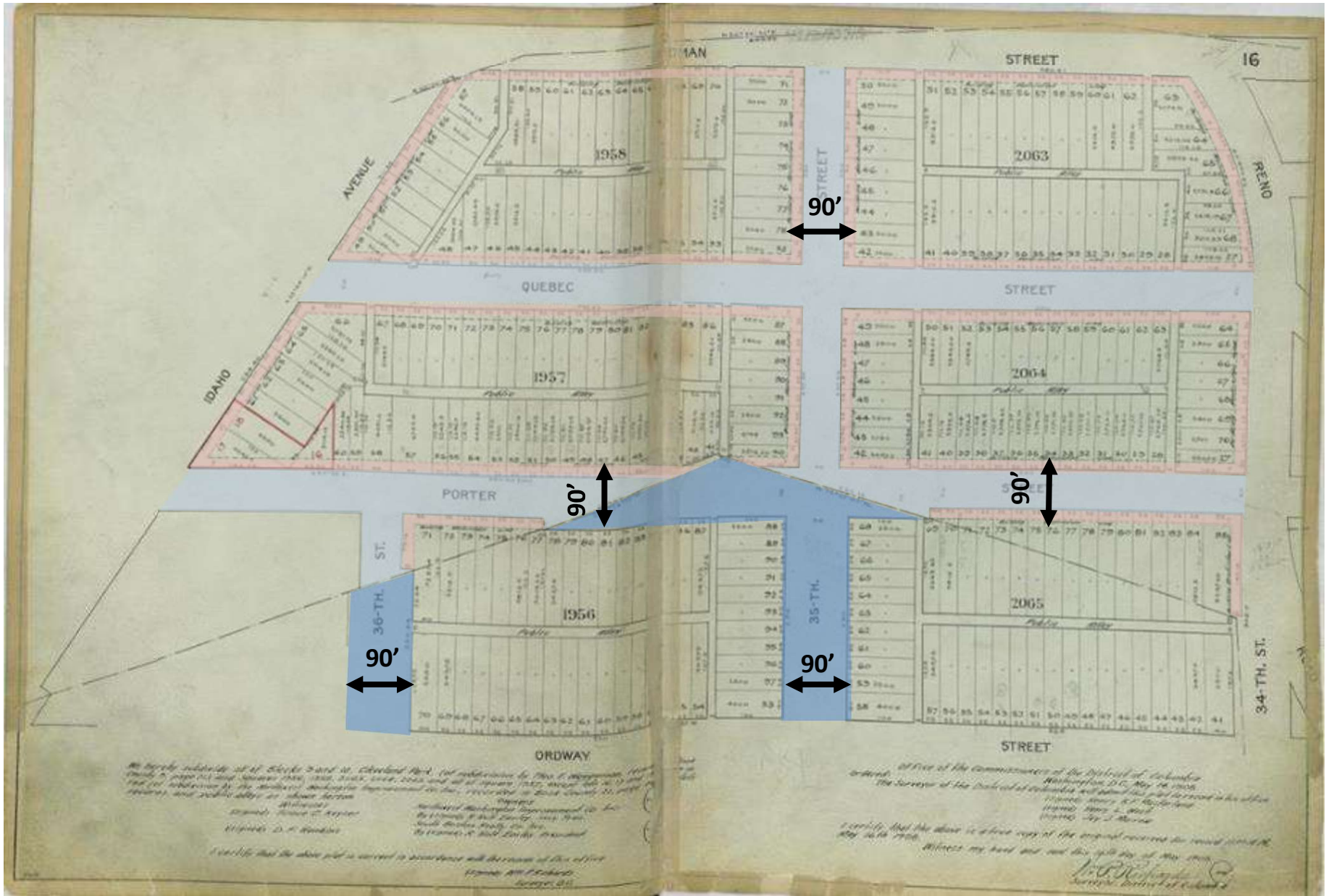
§ 9-203.05. Area between property line and building restriction line.

... The use of this area shall be controlled by the District of Columbia police regulations (DCMR Title 24) with respect to the use of public space ...

# Building Restriction Lines

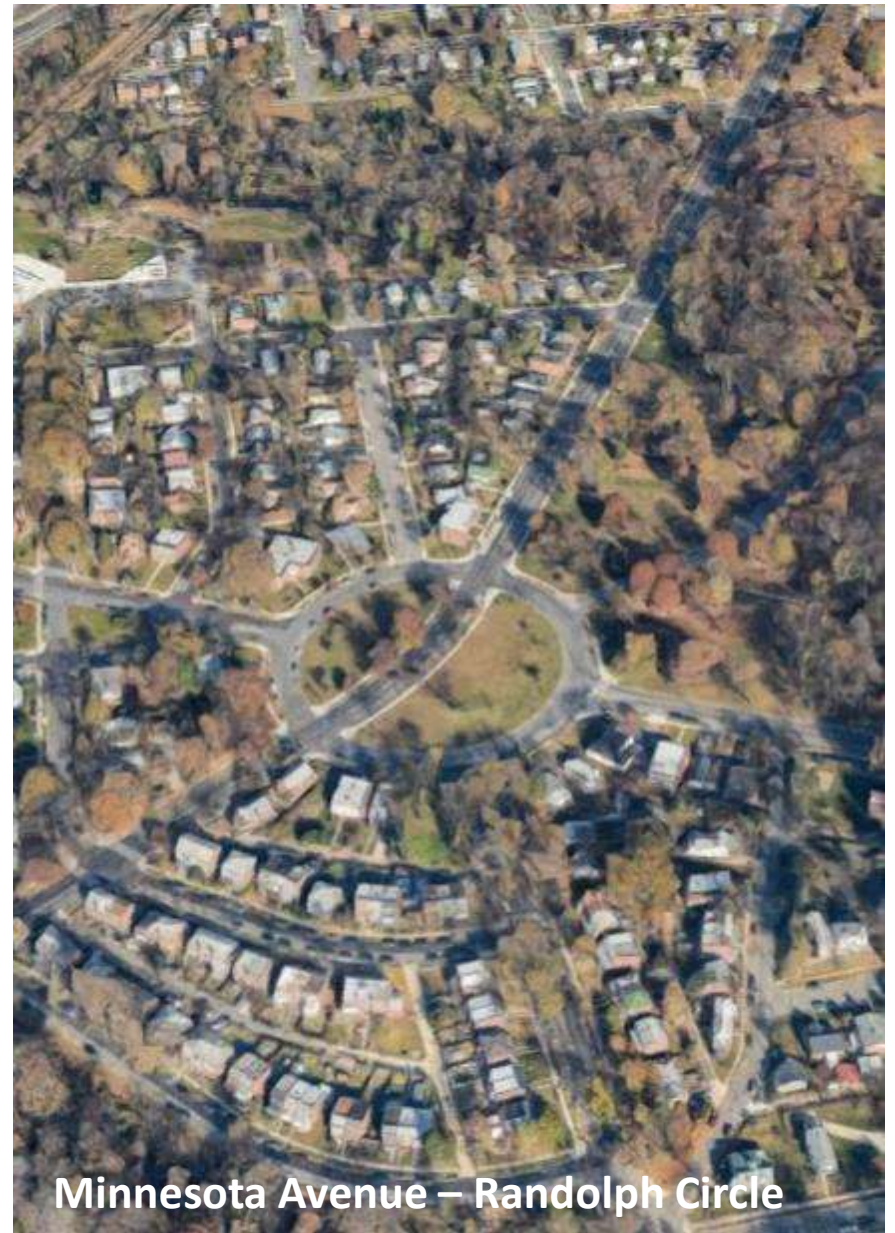


# Building Restriction Lines

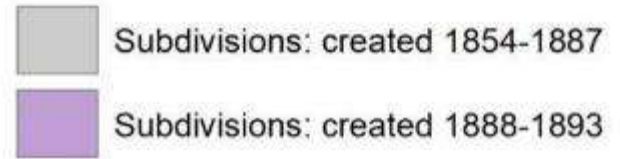
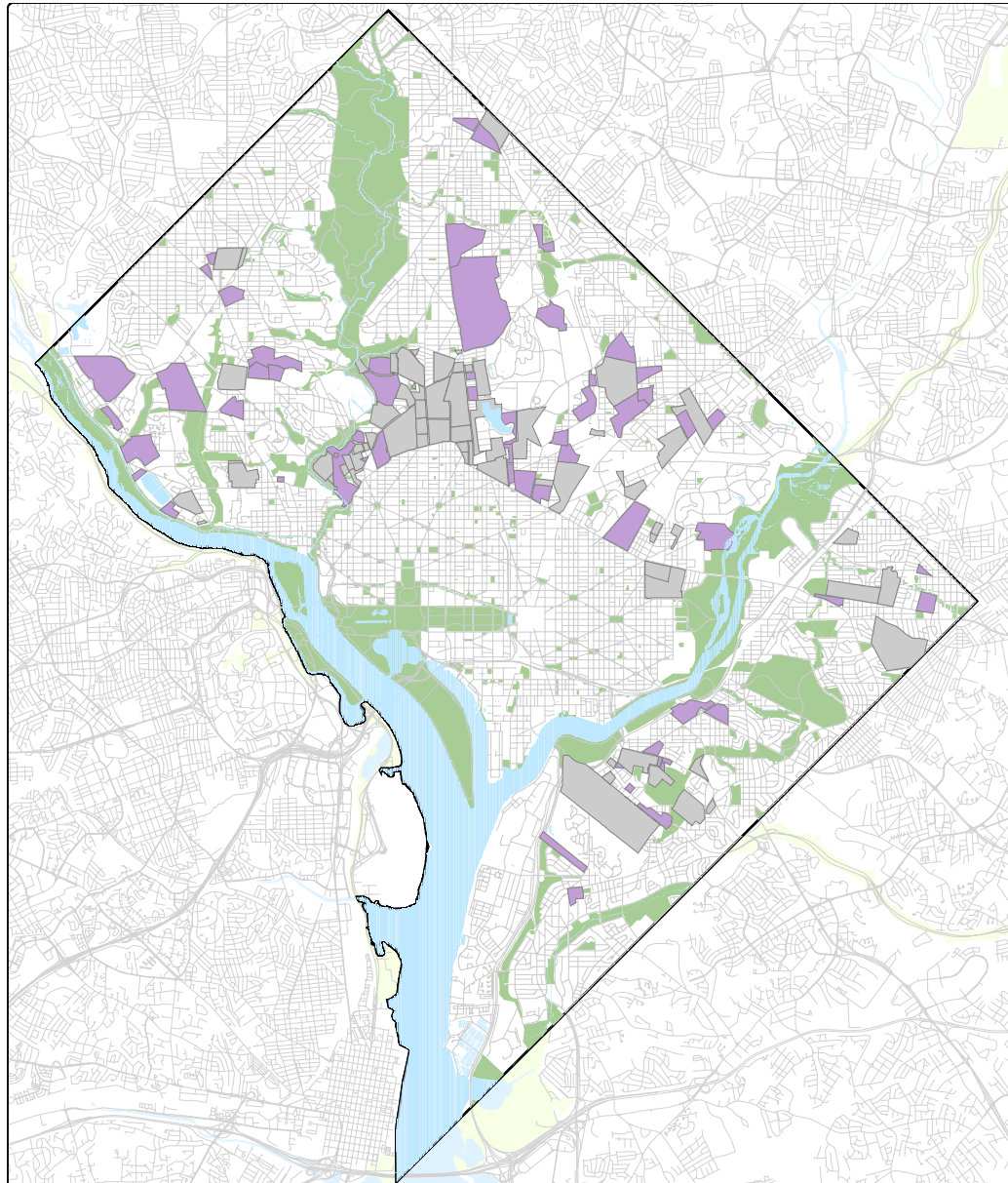


3500 block of Porter Street NW

## Features of the Highway Plan



## Early Subdivisions



# Early Subdivisions



## Streets of the L'Enfant Plan



## Early Subdivisions



Mount Pleasant

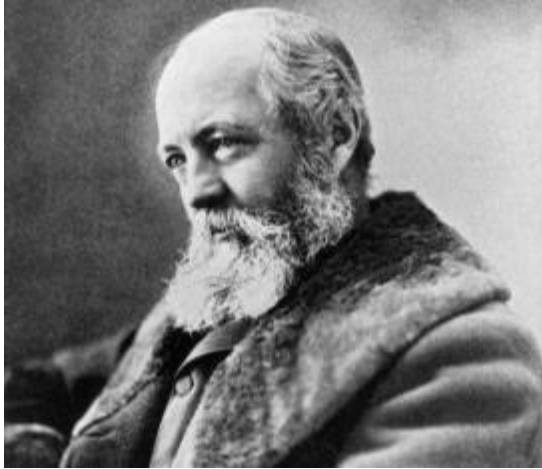


LeDroit Park

## Early Regulated Subdivisions



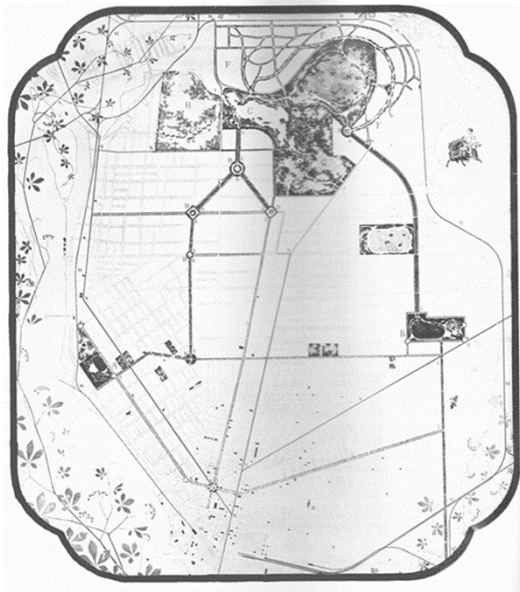
# Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. and Olmsted Brothers



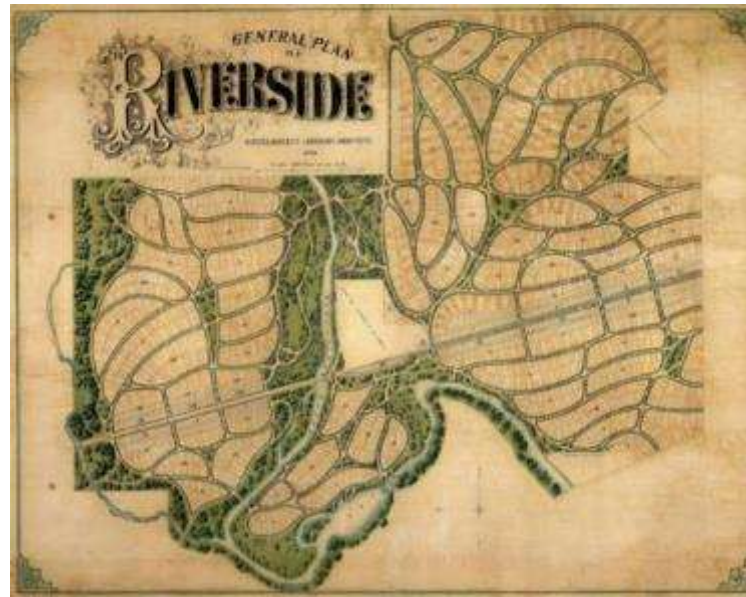
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.



Boston, Massachusetts: Emerald Necklace – 1878 to 1896



Buffalo, New York - 1868



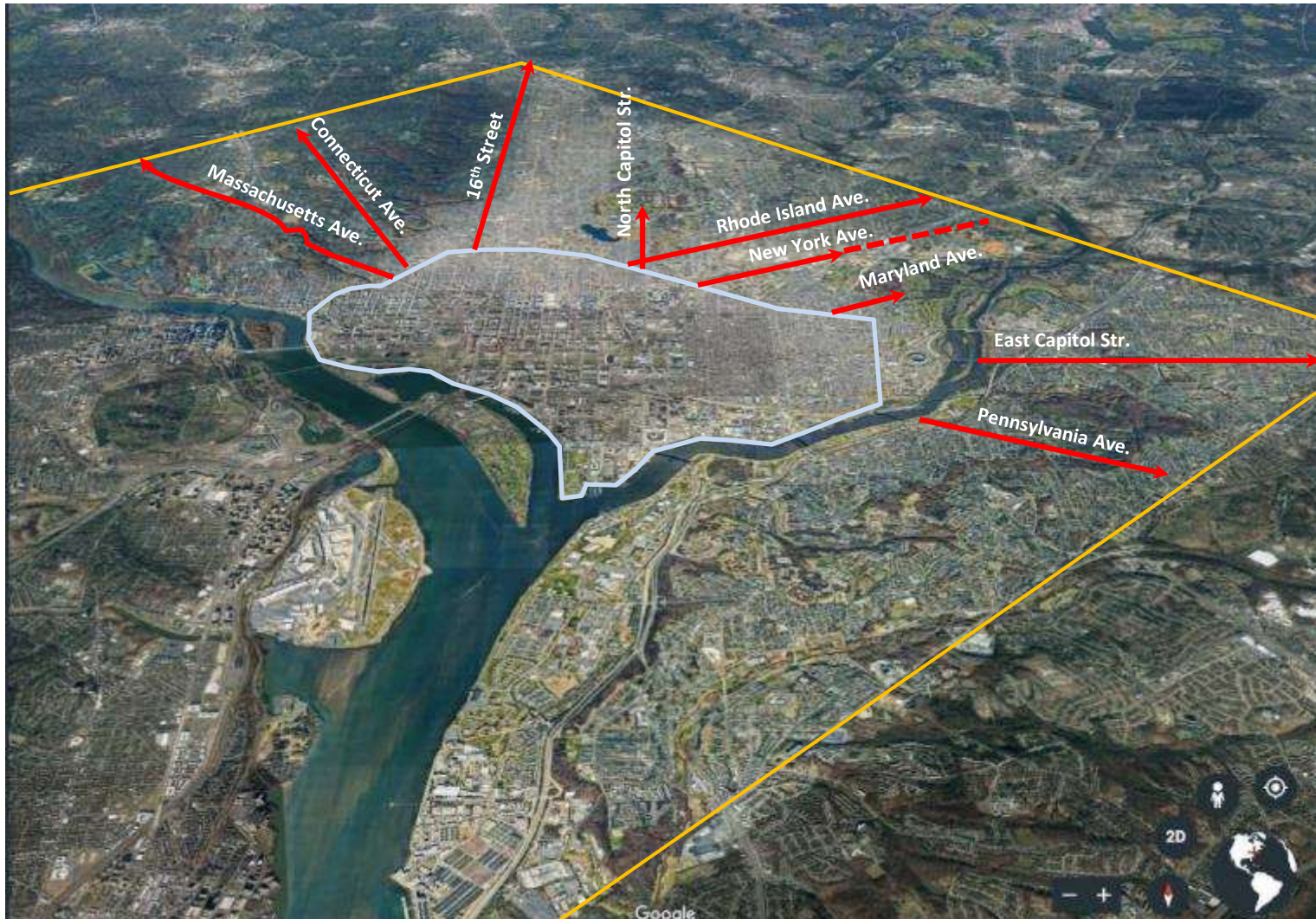
Riverside, IL - 1869



## Draw Upon Natural Scenery



# Extending Arterials



# Extending Arterials



# Extending Arterials



## Extending Arterials



Connecticut Avenue

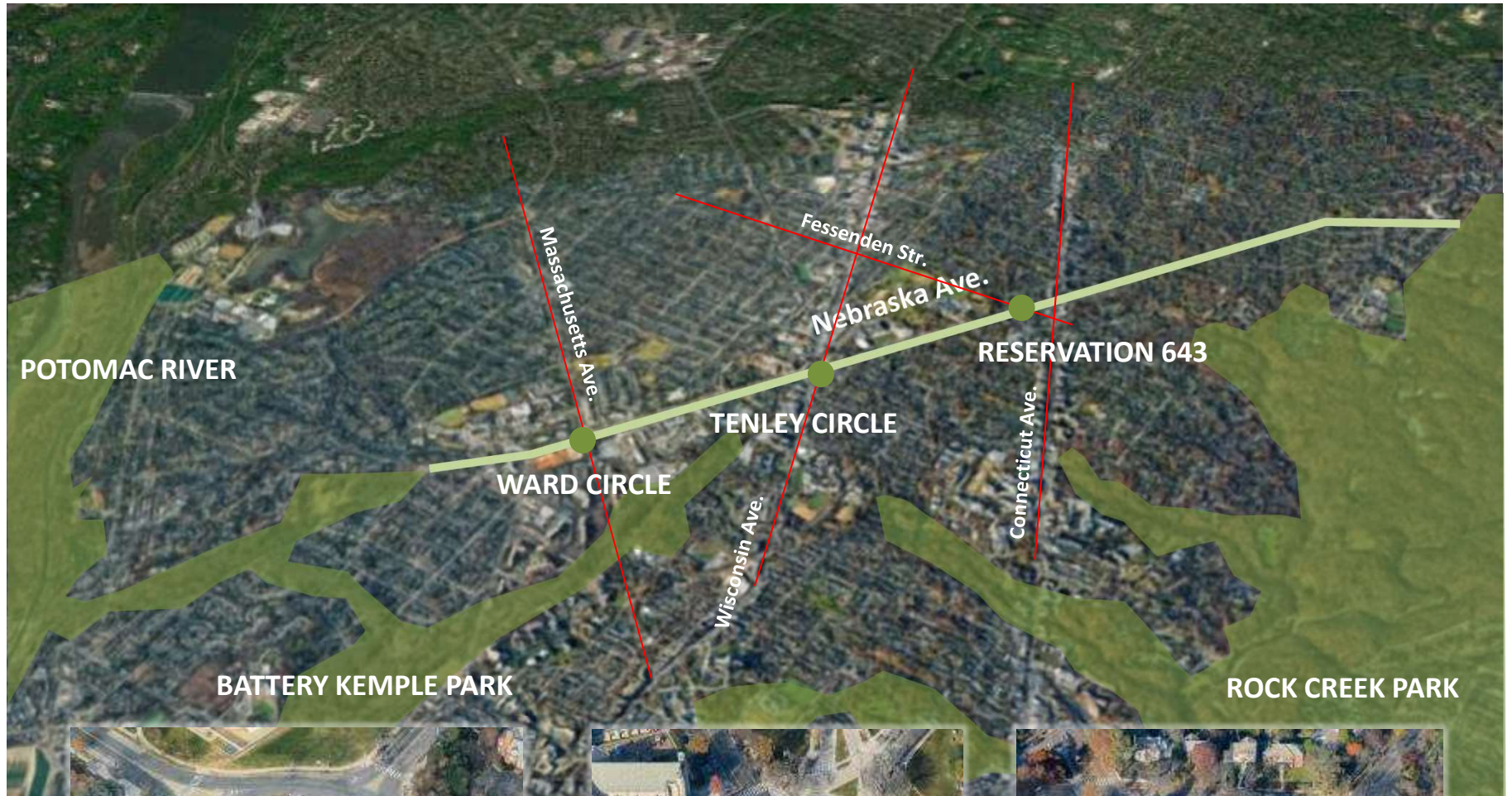


16<sup>th</sup> Street NW

# Connect Parks with Parkways



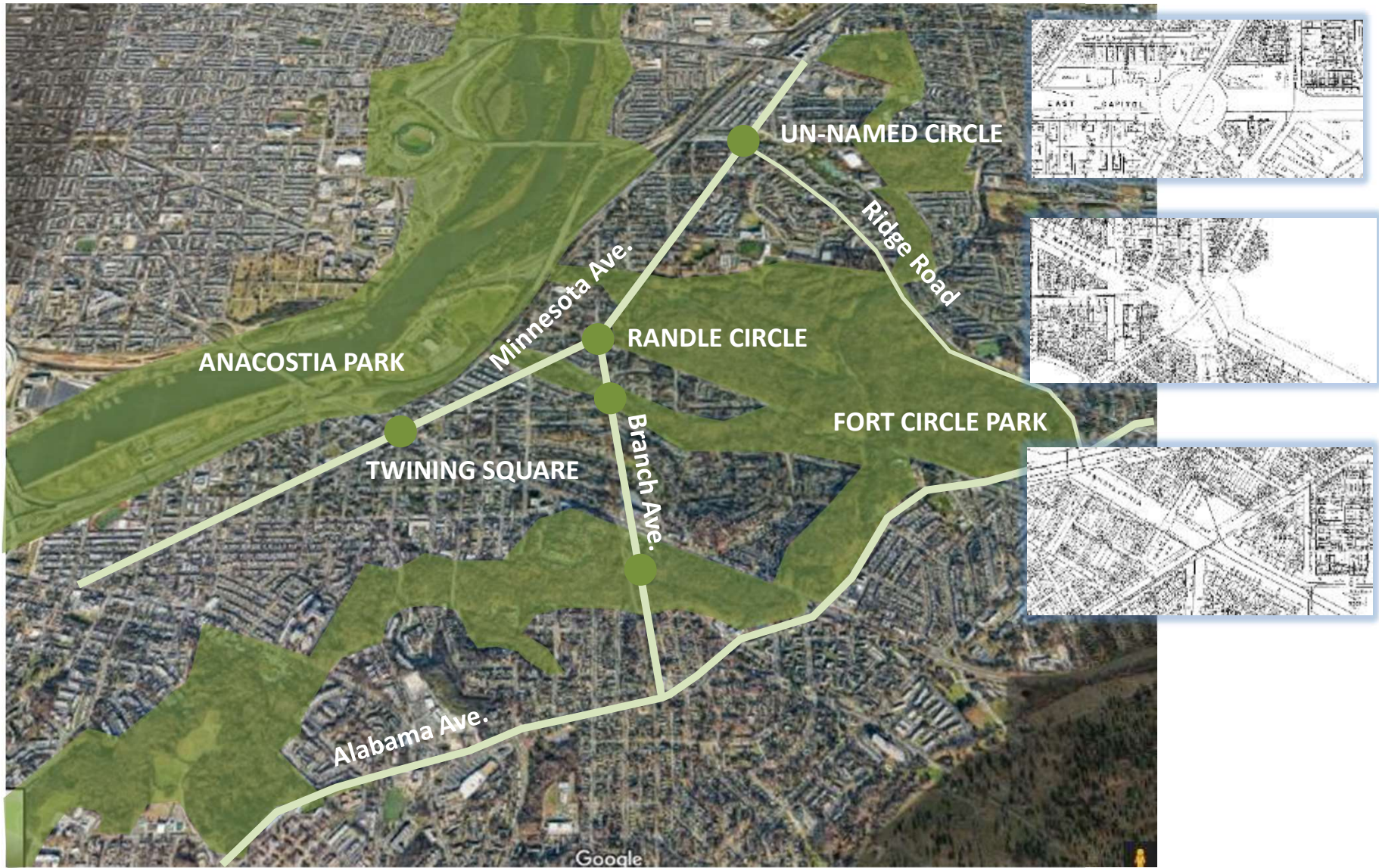
# Connect Parks with Parkways



## Connect Parks with Parkways



# Connect Parks with Parkways



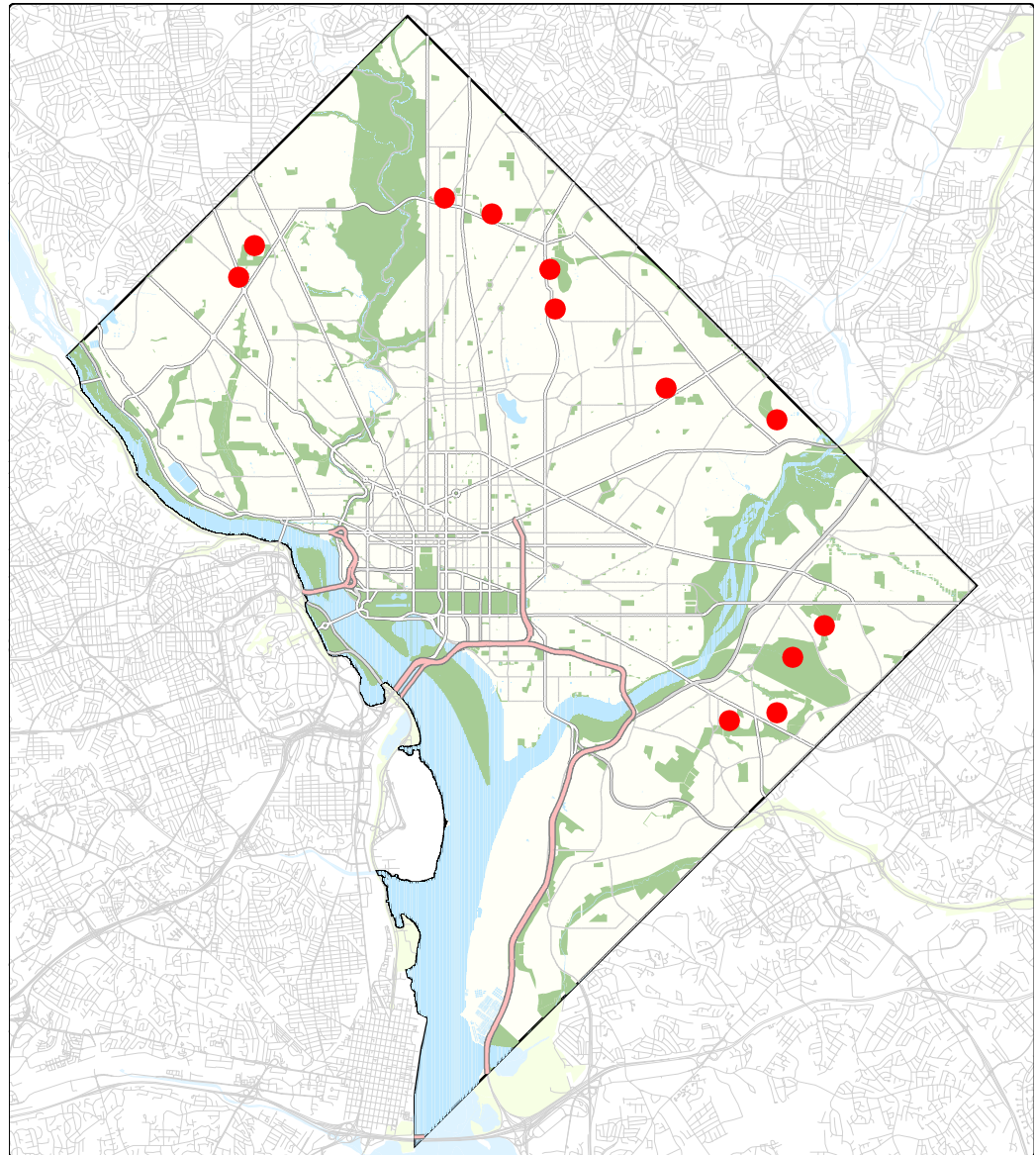
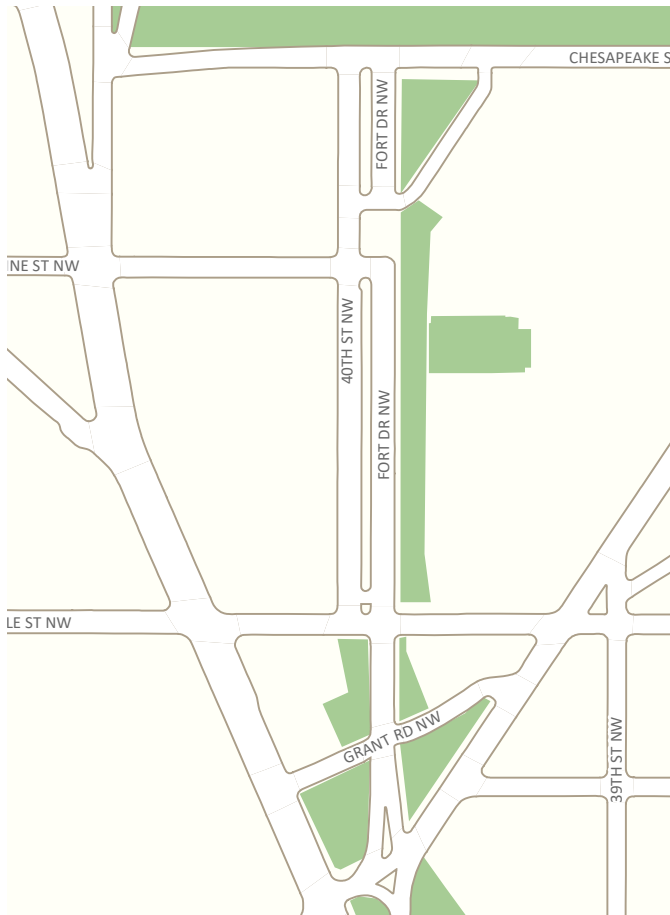
## Extend Parks into Neighborhoods



# Big Ideas Take Precedence



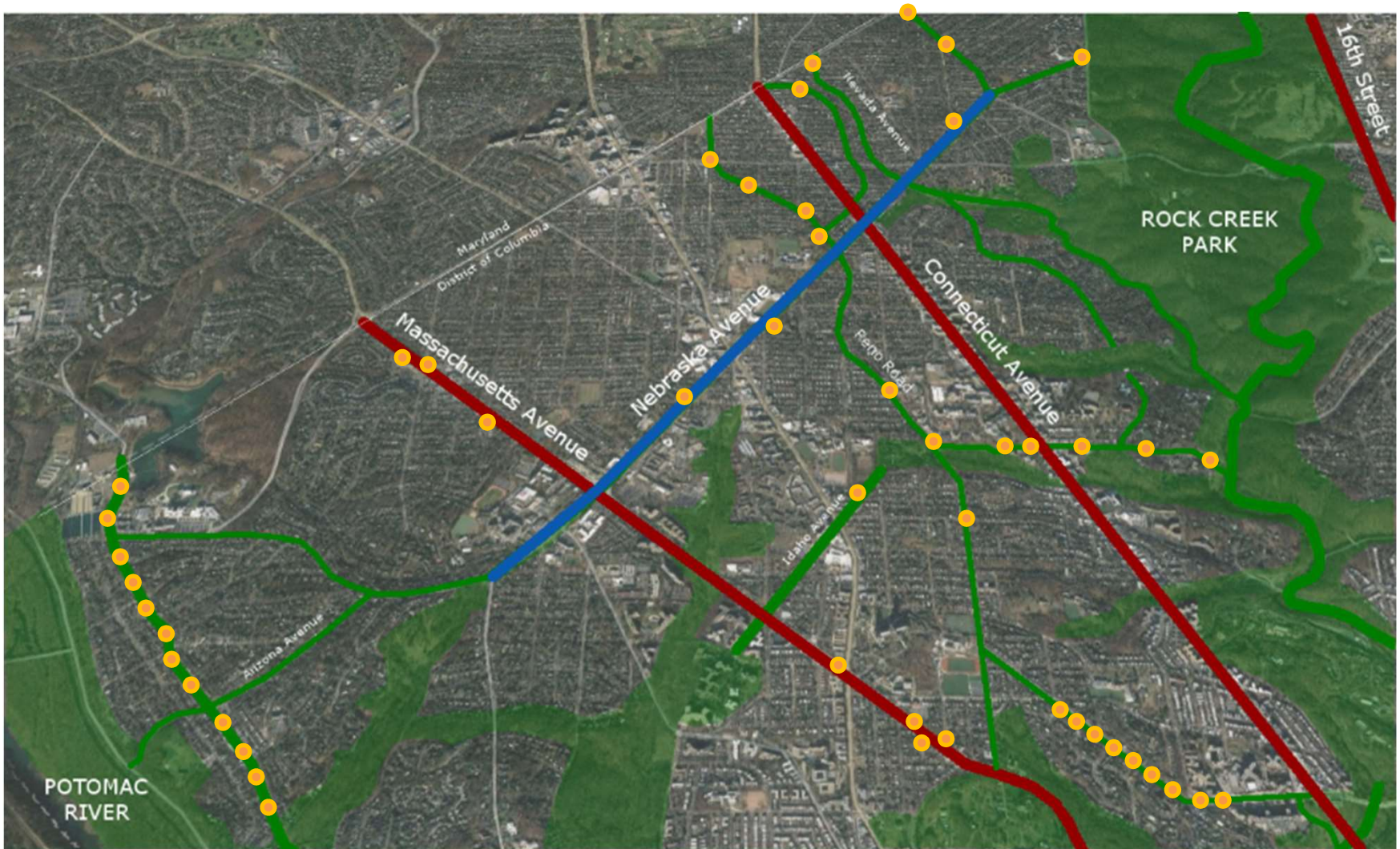
# Sections of “Fort Drive”



# Small Parks



# Putting it all Together



# Putting it all Together



### **§ 9-101.13. Subdivision to conform to plan of Washington.**

No subdivision of land in the District of Columbia without the limits of the City of Washington shall be recorded in the Office of the Surveyor or in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds unless the same shall have been first approved by the Mayor of the District of Columbia and be in conformity with the recorded plans for a permanent system of highways.

### **§ 9-103.01. Width of highways.**

The Mayor of the District of Columbia is hereby authorized and directed to prepare a plan for the extension of a permanent system of highways over all that portion of said District not included within the limits of the Cities of Washington and Georgetown. Said system shall be made as nearly in conformity with the street plan of the City of Washington as the Council of the District of Columbia may deem advisable and practicable. The highways provided in such plans shall not in any case be less than 90 feet nor more than 160 feet wide, except in cases of existing highways, which may be established of any width not less than their existing width and not more than 160 feet in width.

### § 9-101.06. Public notice of proposed plan.

- (a) At least 30 days prior to the submissions by the Mayor of the District of Columbia to the National Capital Planning Commission and to the Council of the District of Columbia for approvals of a proposed modification to the permanent system of highways, the Mayor shall provide written notice of an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed modification to:
- 1) Each owner of land within the squares in which or adjacent to which the proposed modification is located, by registered mail to the address to which taxation notifications are sent by the District of Columbia Department of Finance and Revenue;
  - 2) Each Advisory Neighborhood Commission within whose commission area the proposed modification is located; and
  - 3) The public, by publishing the proposed modification in the District of Columbia Register.
- (b) Copies of comments received by the Mayor shall be included in any subsequent submission by the Mayor to the Council of the District of Columbia of a resolution to consider the proposed modification to the permanent system of highways.

### § 9-101.12. New highway plans authorized.

The Mayor of the District of Columbia is hereby authorized, whenever in his judgment the public interests require it, to prepare a new highway plan for any portion of the District of Columbia, and submit the same for approval, after public hearing, to the National Capital Planning Commission; such highway plans shall be prepared under §§ 9-101.04 to 9-101.06 and 9-103.01 to 9-103.05, and upon approval and recording of any such new highway plan it shall take the place of and stand for any previous plan for the portion of the District of Columbia affected

## Regulations and Standards



### **Public Realm Design Manual**

A Summary of District of Columbia Regulations  
and Specifications for the Design of Public Space Elements

*Version 2.1 - March 2019*



Government of the District of Columbia  
Muriel Bowser, Mayor

