



REPAIRING & CONNECTING:

KENNEDY CENTER, LINCOLN MEMORIAL, THE POTOMAC RIVER,
ROCK CREEK PARK, AND THE NATIONAL MALL

INFRASTRUCTURE THAT DIVIDES THE CITY

The 1960s extension of I-66 into downtown Washington, DC, cut off neighborhoods from the Potomac River and restricted access to the Kennedy Center. The highway's design favors cars, creating unsafe pedestrian crossings and degrading the environment. The design also disrupts Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 plan and the 1902 McMillan Commission plan for the National Mall. Our design team advocates for replacing the outdated infrastructure with a revitalized space, enhancing park areas, real estate potential, and connecting the Kennedy Center to downtown, like the city's Wharf and Navy Yard redevelopments.



KEY ISSUES IN THE AREA

1. Local neighborhoods are disconnected from the waterfront and the National Mall by highways and the traffic they generate.
2. Automobile-oriented waterfront limits meaningful public access and activity.
3. Views of and access to the Kennedy Center from downtown are blocked resulting in no clear presence of this cultural resource in the city.
4. Views of and access between the Kennedy Center and the Lincoln Memorial and National Mall are blocked.

OPPORTUNITIES



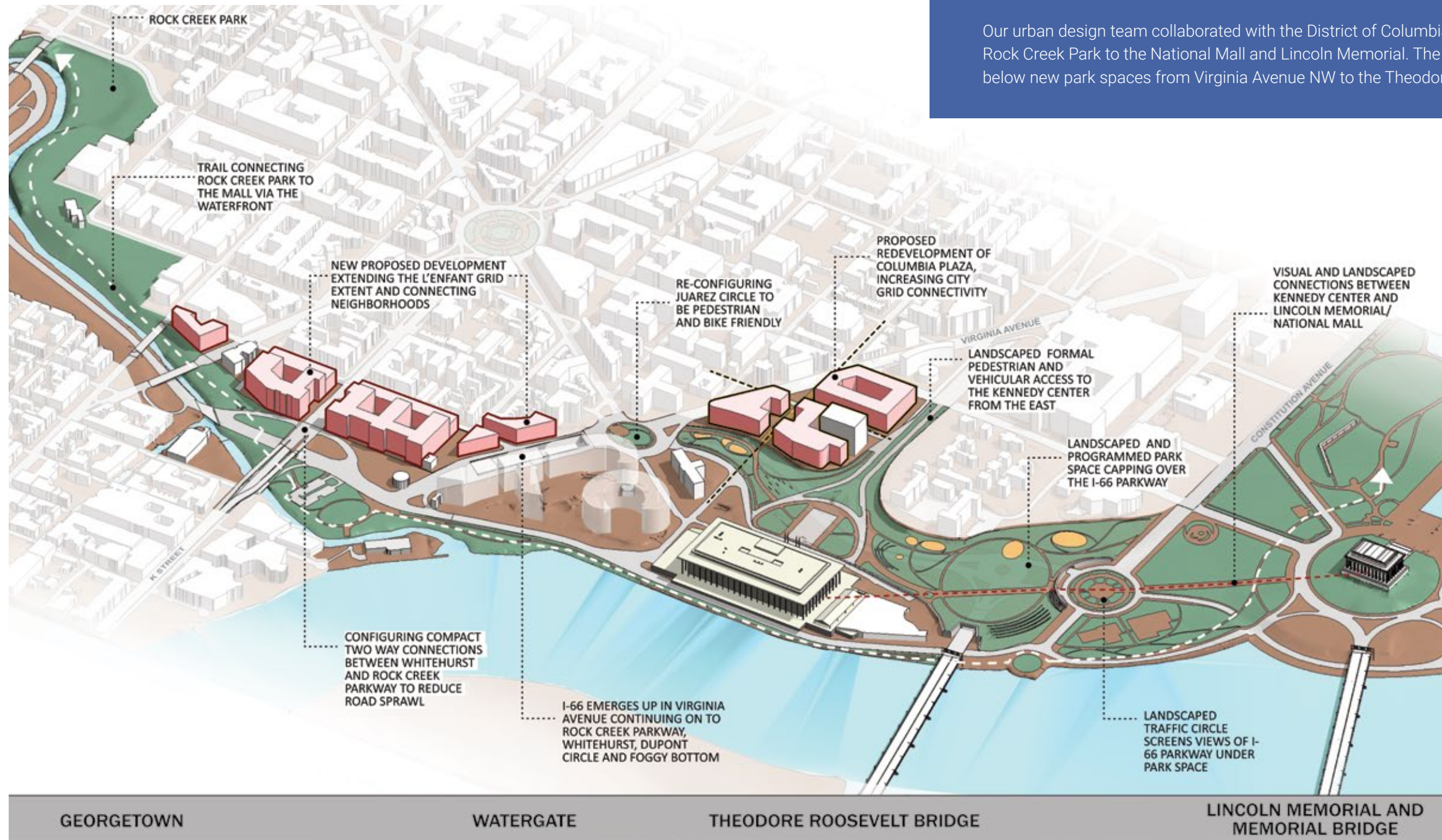
Big thinking can result in high value: increased park space, real estate opportunities and connectivity, and an improved relationship between the Kennedy Center, Downtown and the National Mall.

0 100 200 400 FT

- New Private Development Opportunity
- Added Green Space
- Monumental Buildings

KEY INTERVENTIONS

Our urban design team collaborated with the District of Columbia to create a continuous park connecting Rock Creek Park to the National Mall and Lincoln Memorial. The plan involves pushing road infrastructure below new park spaces from Virginia Avenue NW to the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge.



Goals include:

- Reducing highway impact to improve urban design and encourage pedestrian activity
- Adding 27 acres of park space for habitats, stormwater management, and tree cover, connecting the National Mall to Rock Creek Park
- Restoring parts of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans
- Identifying development sites that bridge the city, park, and waterfront
- Integrating the Kennedy Center into the city with better pedestrian connections to The Mall and Lincoln Memorial
- Maintaining current traffic flow while simplifying routes under Juarez Circle to Virginia Avenue NW and I-66
- Enhancing the Kennedy Center's arrival experience from downtown's west side.

Diagrammatic Program Map

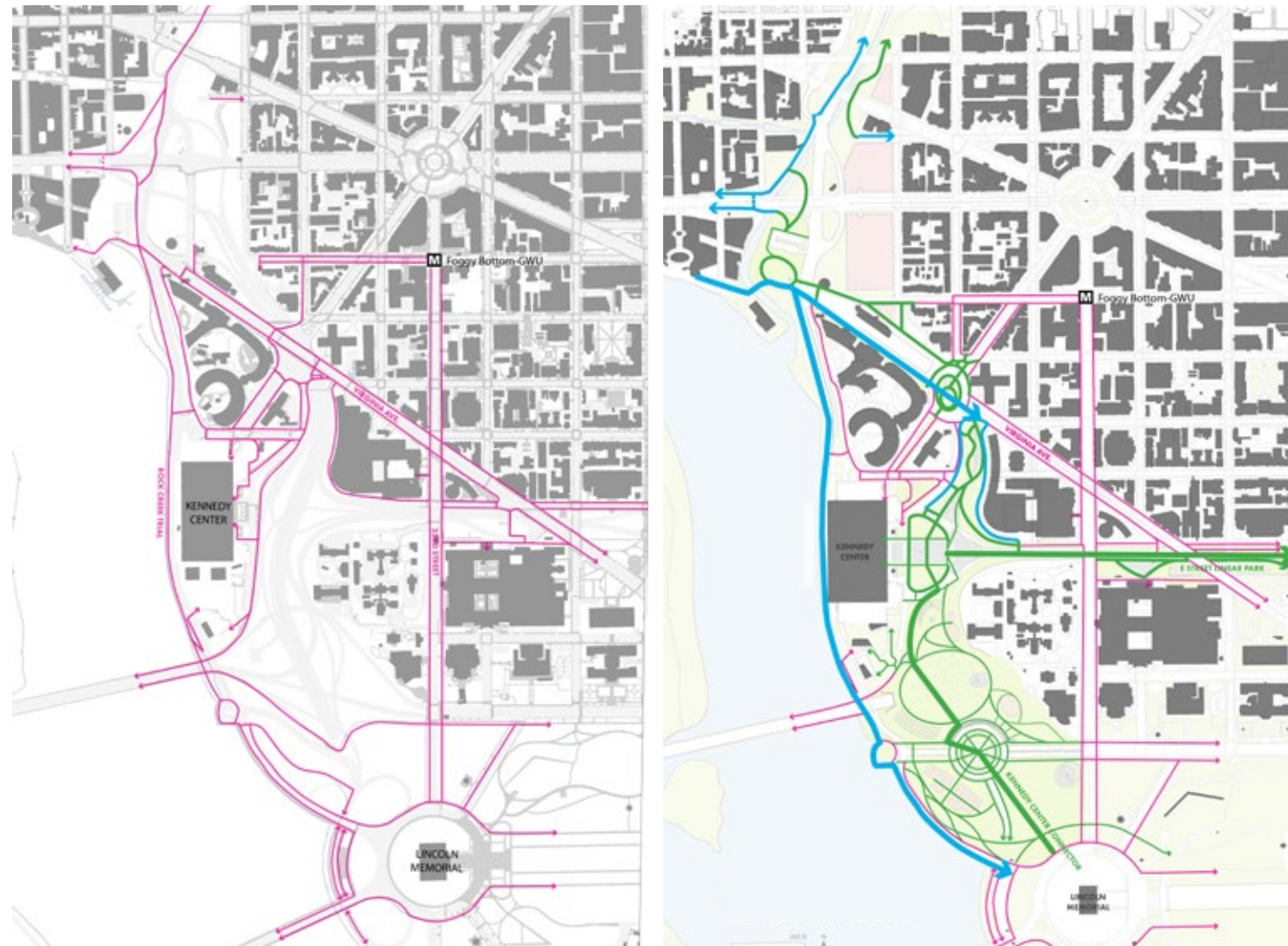
RESTORING HISTORIC CONNECTIONS

Our concept revises access to the Whitehurst Freeway with an Urban Diamond configuration, keeping Rock Creek Parkway continuous while connecting K Street NW via short ramps and streets. Virginia Avenue gains a proper termination, ideal for a new memorial. Moving the highway north of Virginia Avenue opens up new development parcels along Rock Creek Parkway, addressing housing needs and restoring original L'Enfant Plan blocks.



■ CREATING A WALKABLE CITY

This proposal enhances walkability by improving pedestrian routes and linking them to existing landscapes and sidewalks. It restores the historic urban plan, increases waterfront access, and places cars beneath a park, creating a safer, more vibrant neighborhood. The Kennedy Center is better integrated with the city through pedestrian-friendly connections. Juarez Circle is redesigned for safer, more attractive pedestrian access, strengthening links between Rock Creek Park, the Kennedy Center, the National Mall, and nearby neighborhoods.



- New pedestrian route
- Improved existing pedestrian route
- Improved existing pedestrian route



HIGHWAYS MOVE OVER FOR PEDESTRIANS

The existing vehicular network acts like two systems instead of one.

- Rock Creek Parkway to Memorial Bridge and Independence Avenue NW
- Whitehurst Freeway to I-66 and E Street NW

The proposal combines existing infrastructure into a single system.

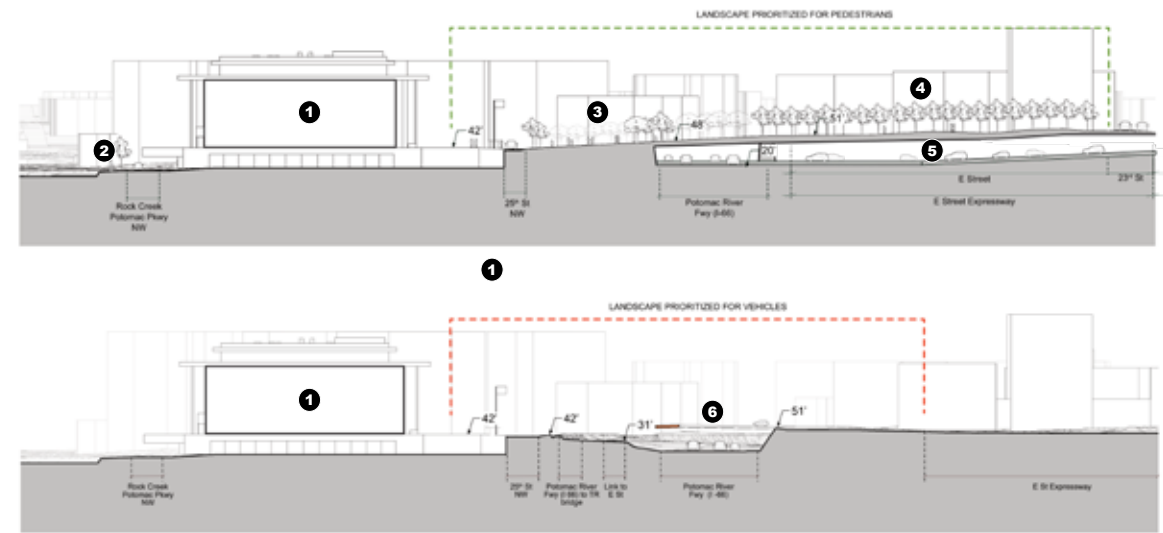
- Main north-south route east of the Kennedy Center becomes sunken arterial
- Traffic signs rather than freeway ramps connect the east-west routes

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS & SUSTAINABILITY



Rendered Landscape Plan

1. Virginia Avenue Overlook
2. Rock Creek Bridge
3. Juarez Circle
4. Pedestrian Promenade
5. Foggy Bottom neighborhood connector park
6. Kennedy center entry plaza with monumental sculpture
7. Programmed park space
8. Monument to visually terminate Theodore Roosevelt Bridge
9. Landscaped amphitheater
10. Landscaped traffic circle at Constitution Avenue
11. Planned Desert Shield memorial
12. Reconfigured public beach volleyball courts
13. Land bridge over Ohio Drive for continuity of pedestrian access
14. E Street linear park and promenade



Top: Section showing proposed design
Bottom: Section showing existing conditions

1. Kennedy Center
2. River pedestrian promenade
3. Kennedy Center entrance plaza
4. E Street Linear park and promenade
5. Proposed sunken highway with pedestrian realm above
6. Existing sunken highway with highway bridges above

