Community Design I

Urban &

UNIVERSITY OF THE **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA** — 1851

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TOWER WATER FOUNTAIN

UDC THEATER

SPLASH PARK

NEW WEST PLAZA

EXIST. BLDG BEYOND

NEW MIXED USE BLDG

WINDOM CIRCLE

NEW EAST PLAZA

NEW BOULEVARD

UNDER PASS

NEW BOULEVARD

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Executive Summary

The Connecticut Ave. N.W. and Windom Pl. N.W. Project redevelopment plan proposes a new site plan design that will better utilize the site and create connectivity within the location by creating green spaces and plazas to encourage community interaction.

The study proposes a development plan for the site and visions to enhance the public realm surrounding the site based on the ideas of "continuation and connection." This plan will address issues that currently deter the usage of the streets that are present and address goals for resolving pedestrian and vehicular conflict and the expansion of retail options. Connection is sought through the extension of Soapstone Valley Trail and the expanded pedestrian plazas.

Introduction

The proposed site for redevelopment is located at the intersection at Connecticut Ave. N.W. and Windom Pl. N.W. The site is located in an area of Connecticut Ave. that consists of a mixture of Residential, Commercial and University buildings. The University of the District of Columbia is located a block away from the site's location. The site also provides access to various services such as a local gym, Giant Food Store, Calvert Wine and Spirits, cleaners, pharmacies and various restaurants. The site's location provides an excellent opportunity to enhance the public realm.

Figure 1 - Site Location

Site Analysis

The site provides outdoor café dining/seating. There is public art in the vicinity in the form of spheres at the Metro Station. The site also provides a bike share program along with bike racks for bikers to secure their bikes.

There are a lot trees. Soapstone Valley Park is present, but under-utilized. The location of the UDC-Van Ness Metro Station provides constant flow of pedestrian traffic mainly flowing north on Connecticut Ave. The since of community is stronger during events such as Farmer's Markets and Neighborhood Expos.

The site also has the opportunity to provide more quality retail and restaurants. The proposed location is not inviting. The site does not provide attractive places to gather or provide a sense of community space.

The site is not a destination now and lacks vibrancy, which misses the opportunity to take advantage of the pedestrian traffic. There is a lack of benches and green space. There is a lack of connection to Soap Stone Valley Park from the street.
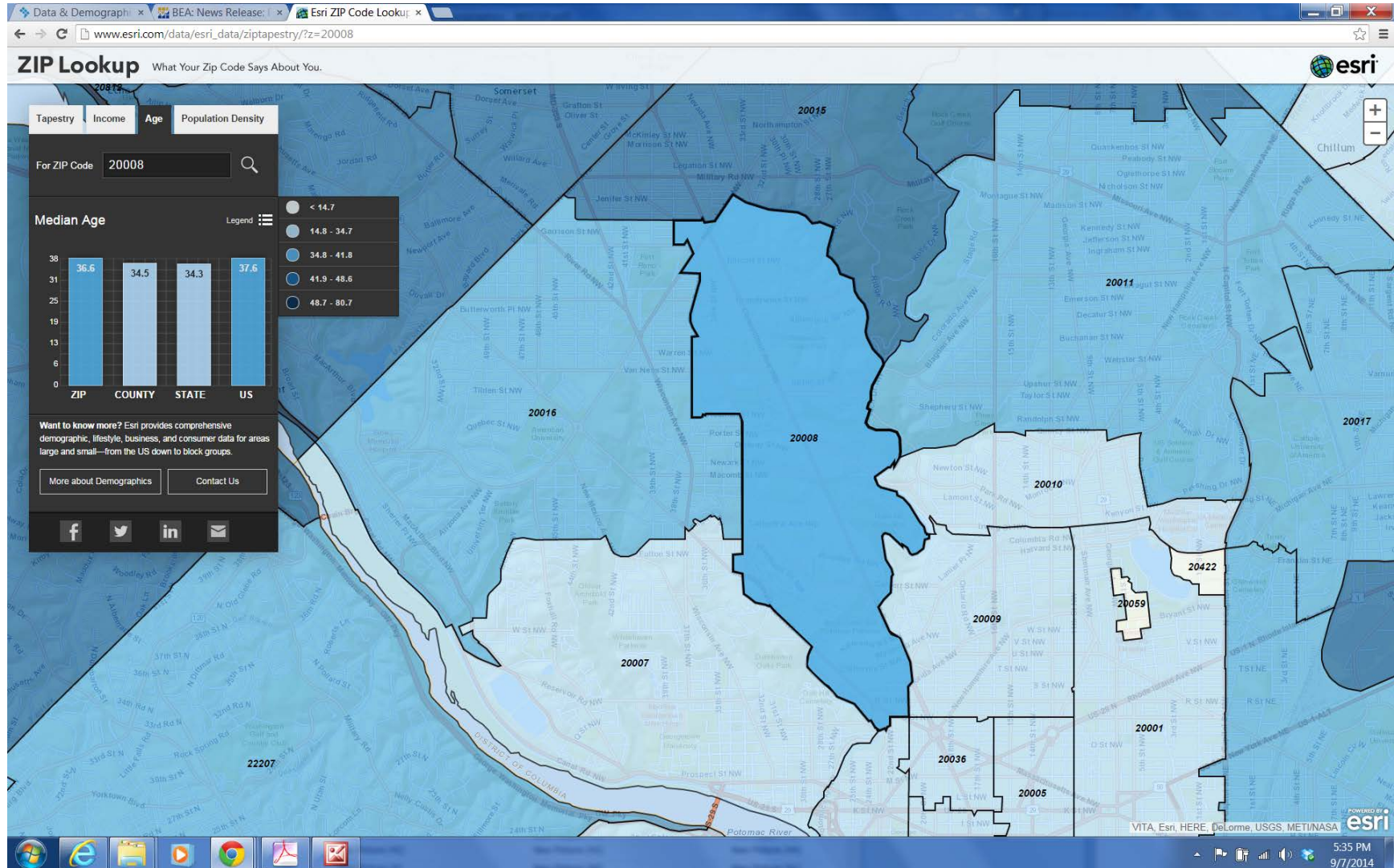
Demographics - Age

Figure 2 - Average Age
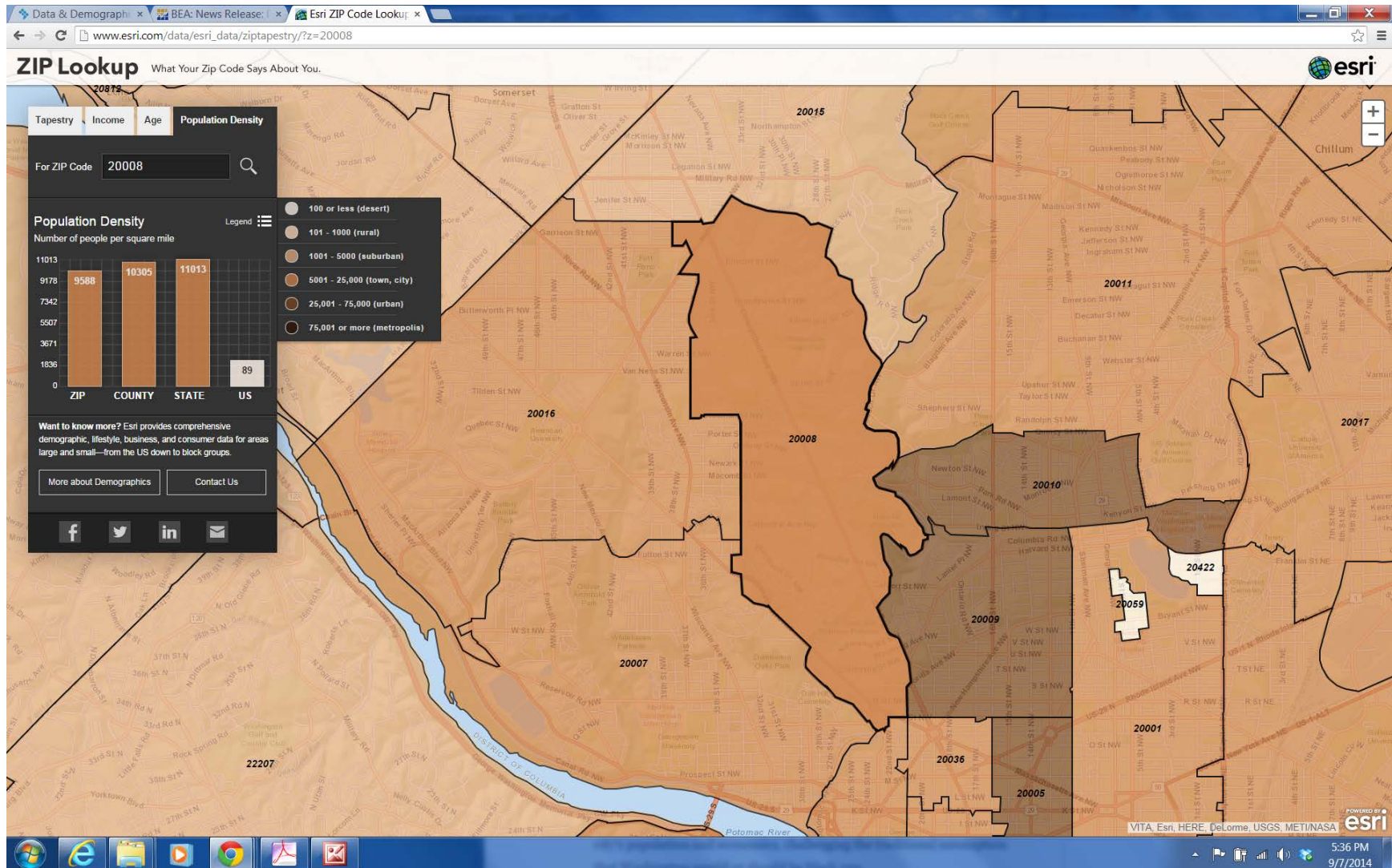
Demographics - Population

Figure 3 – Population Density
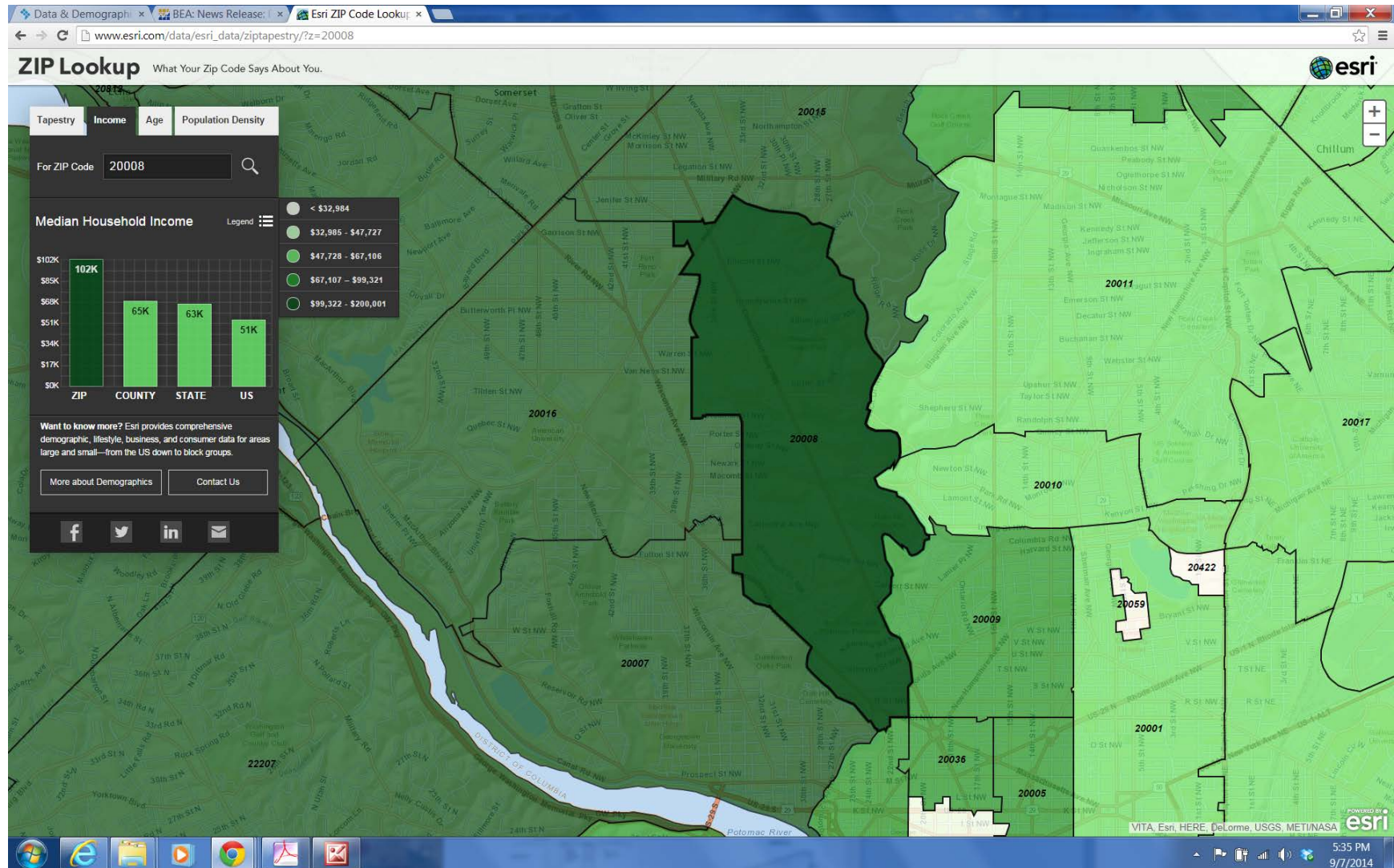
Demographics – Income

Figure 4 - Median Household Income

Zoning

The site is located in the C-3-A Zone.

The C-3-A Zone permits matter-of-right medium density development, with a density incentive for residential development within a general pattern of mixed-use development to a maximum lot occupancy of 75% for residential use and 100% for all other uses, a maximum FAR of 4.0 for residential and 2.5 FAR for other permitted uses and a maximum height of sixty-five (65) feet. Rear yard requirements are twelve (12) feet; one family detached dwellings and one family semi-detached dwellings side yard requirements are eight (8) feet.


Figure 5 - Zoning Map

Transportation

The proposed site (Windom Pl and Connecticut Ave.) is a block away from the Van Ness-UDC Metro Station.

Van Ness–UDC Metro Station is a Washington Metro station serving the Forest Hills and North Cleveland Park neighborhoods of Washington, D.C., United States. The station was opened on December 5, 1981, and is operated by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Providing service for the Red Line, the station is on the 4200 block of Connecticut Avenue Northwest, with exits on either side of Connecticut Avenue. The Van Ness-UDC Metro Station services trains heading in the Shady Grove and Silver Spring/ Glenmont direction. The Van Ness-UDC Metro Station is serviced by the L bus in both north and southbound directions.

Bus stop information from Van Ness-UDC Station
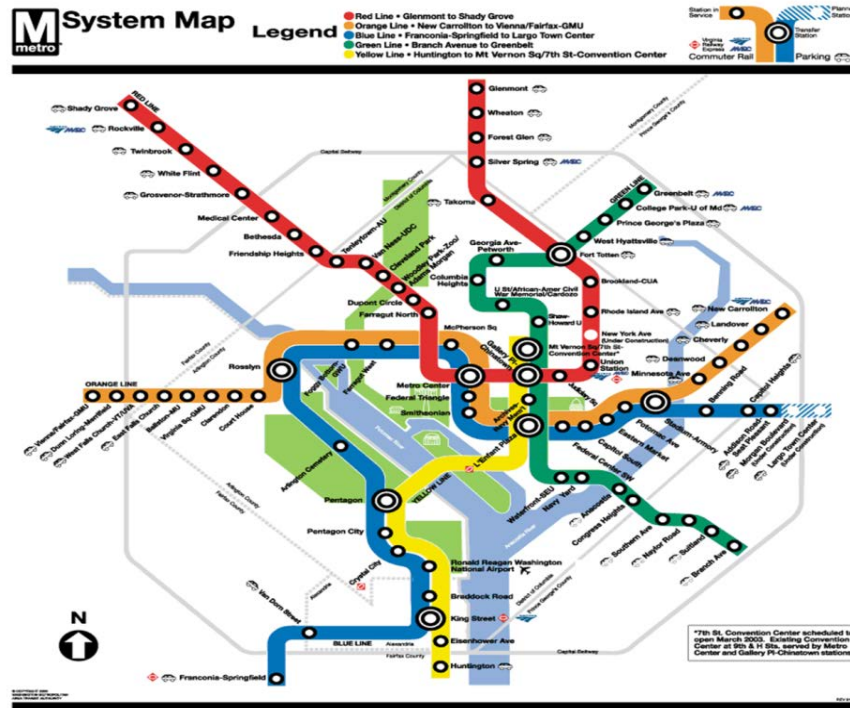
All frequencies in this table are shown in minutes; check schedules for full details.

| Bus Stop	Take Route	DESTINATION	Serving	Operator Code
A	W45	16TH & ARKANSAS	School Route	Metro
	W47	COLUMBIA HEIGHTS	School Route	Metro
F	L1	POTOMAC PARK	Connecticut Ave, 23rd St, 18th St	Metro
	L2	McPHERSON SQ M	Calvert St, 18th St, 21st St, K St	Metro
	L4	DUPONT CIRCLE M	Connecticut Ave	Metro
G	L1-4	CHEVY CHASE CIRCLE	Connecticut Ave	Metro

Concurrent Project

Park Van Ness

Developer BF Saul has begun to replace Van Ness Square that consisted of a low retail complex that contained a Pier 1 Imports, Office Depot, and a number of other stores, with a 273-apartment building and ground floor retail. Park Van Ness will rise 7 stories from Connecticut Avenue, the same height as the Park Connecticut.

This building is right at the end of Yuma Street. The plans show a large arched opening between two halves of the building that lines up with Yuma Street, so drivers or walkers on Yuma will be able to see through to Soapstone Valley Park, a branch of Rock Creek Park, immediately beyond. Past the arch, the opening turns into a large plaza

This project could take a big step toward activating the streetscape in this area. Here, there is surface parking in front of the existing Van Ness Square, which does not create an appealing pedestrian environment. The same is true for many of the buildings at Van Ness, constructed during a period when many architects and developers weren't trying to create appealing, walkable places; therefore, Van Ness has too many large voids, street-fronting parking, or buildings (like Intelsat) set far too far back from the street.

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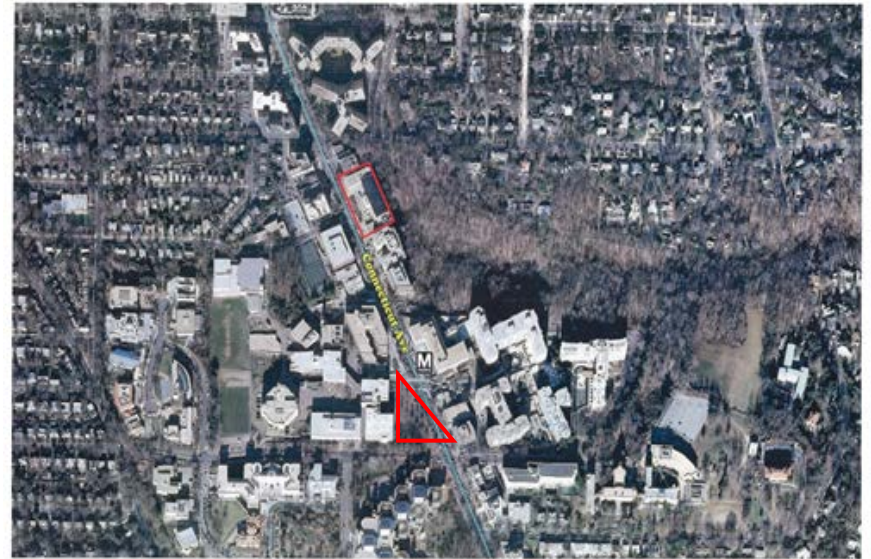
The building will have 226 parking spaces for the 273 apartments (which will range from studios to 3-bedroom units) plus the retail. That means that while many residents will bring cars, not everyone can or will have their own car. The parking will be underground in the front, while the back of those floors will have apartments overlooking the park several stories below Connecticut Avenue.

VIEW FROM YUMA STREET

AERIAL FROM SOUTHEAST

UDC Student Center

The new student center of the University of the District of Columbia anchors the southbound intersection of the site at Connecticut and Van Ness St. The new LEED Platinum building will offer a blend of student and community spaces that will link the University to the surrounding neighborhood.

Plan Foundation

Vision Statement

"Create a destination with a vibrant mix of green outdoor spaces, retail and restaurants. "

What are the Goals?

The foundation of the plan for the intersection of Windom Place and Connecticut Avenue is based on the ideas of "continuation and connection." The plan seeks to address issues that currently deter the activation of the streets that are a cornerstone of a vibrant neighborhood. Continuation is addressed in the goals of resolving the pedestrian and vehicular conflict and in the expansion of retail options. Connection is sought through the extension of Soapstone Valley Trail and the expanded pedestrian plazas.

Pedestrian/Vehicular Conflict
Provide for the safe passage of pedestrians while maintaining the vital thoroughfare

Enhance Pedestrian Plazas
Provide opportunities for connection and community amongst residents and visitors with expanded green open spaces

Connect the Park to the Street
Extend the connection of the Soapstone Valley Trail to provide more visibility

Expand Retail Options
Encourage best highest use of existing parcels in enhancing current retail options

Pedestrian/Vehicular conflict

The existing vehicular network seeks to establish north-south connection from uptown DC to downtown through Connecticut Ave. This constitutes a primary connection. Three lanes from north to south and another three from south to north make this connection possible.
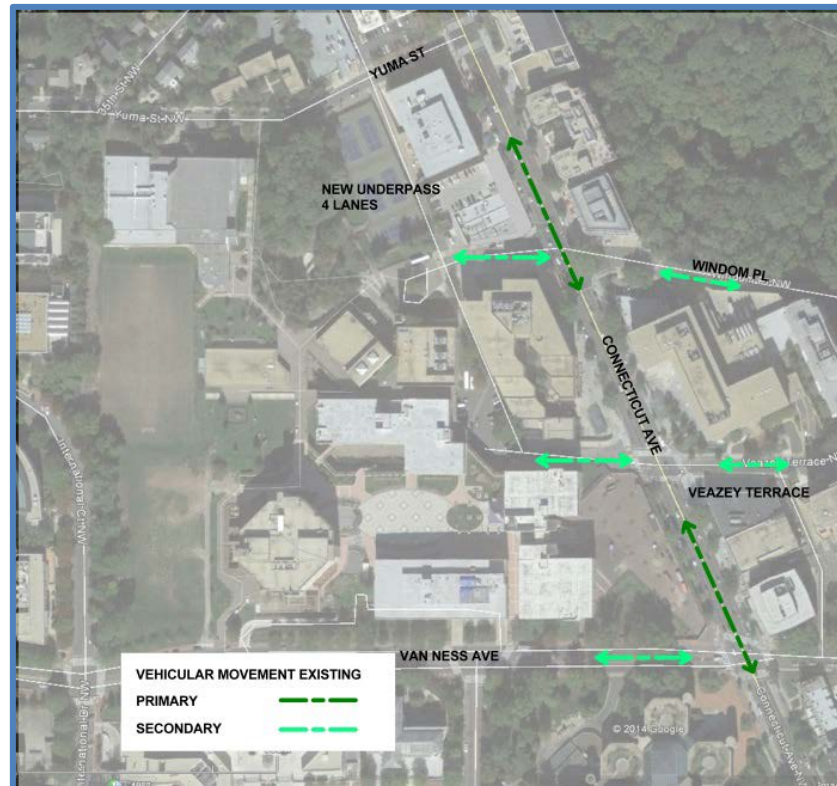

Figure 6 – Existing Vehicular Movement

East- West connection is possible through Van Ness Ave. Other secondary connections occur at Yuma St., Windom Place, Veazey Terrace. Van Ness Ave and Yuma street allow the site to connect to Wisconsin Ave.
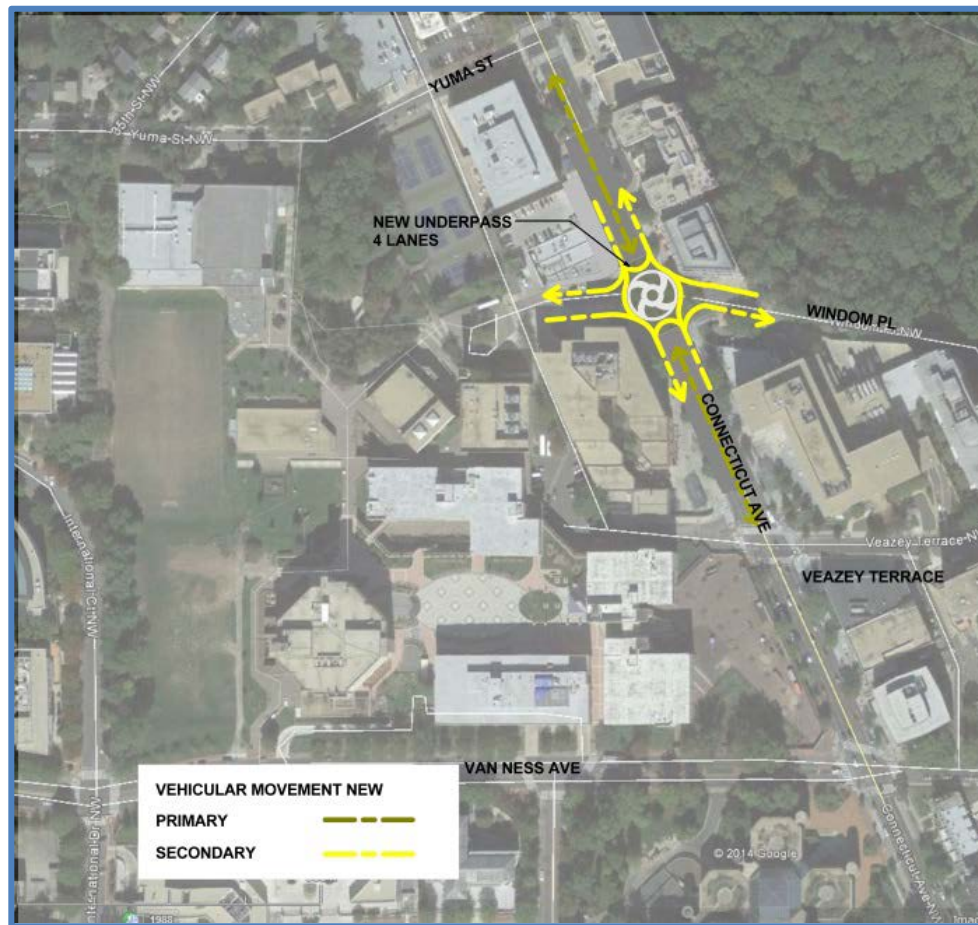

Figure 7 – New Vehicular Movement

As part of improving the north-south connection, an upgrade at the corner of Windom PL and Connecticut Ave is proposed. An underpass will allow a smooth movement of traffic during rush hours. Four lanes through the underpass and two auxiliary lanes one of each side of the under pass will be needed to satisfy the demand.

Figure 8 – Underpass proposed

The main pedestrian movement can be seen on Connecticut Ave (north to south). Minor pedestrian movement occurs from east to west.
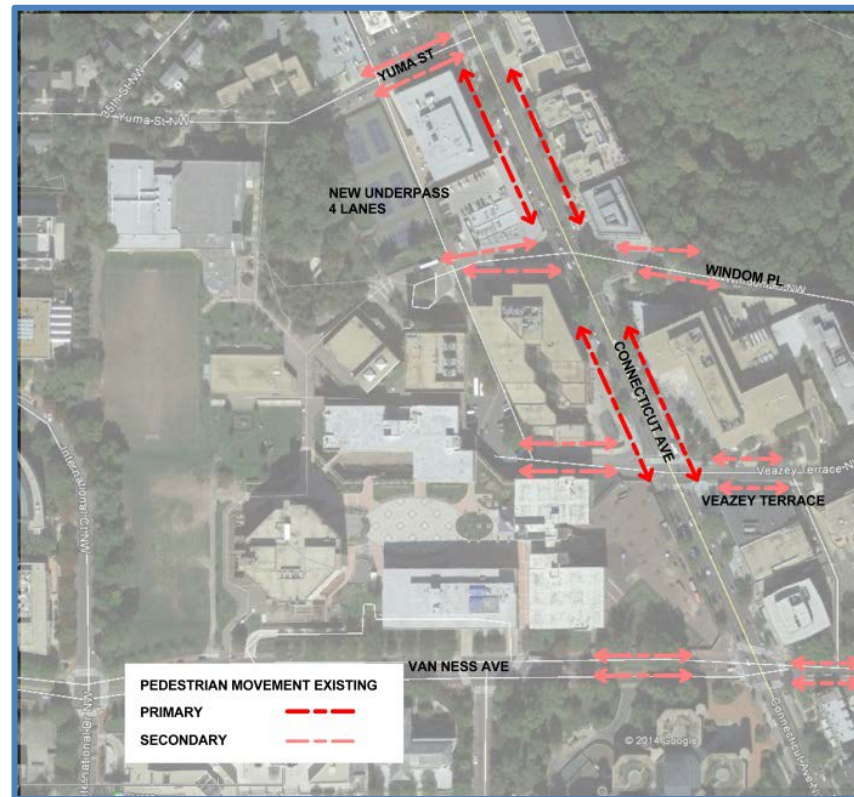

Figure 9 – Existing Pedestrian Movement

The street improvements to Windom Pl will include the creation of sidewalks along the street. This will allow a better pedestrian connection from east to west crossing the circle that will be located at the intersection of Connecticut Ave.

As a result, we are creating pedestrian access to the UDC amphitheater and the park located at the east of the site. This circle and underpass will be a feature on Connecticut Ave and it will be a smooth transition and will allow pedestrian movement to areas that have been forgotten. This circle will also bring people together to create the sense of community along Connecticut Ave.
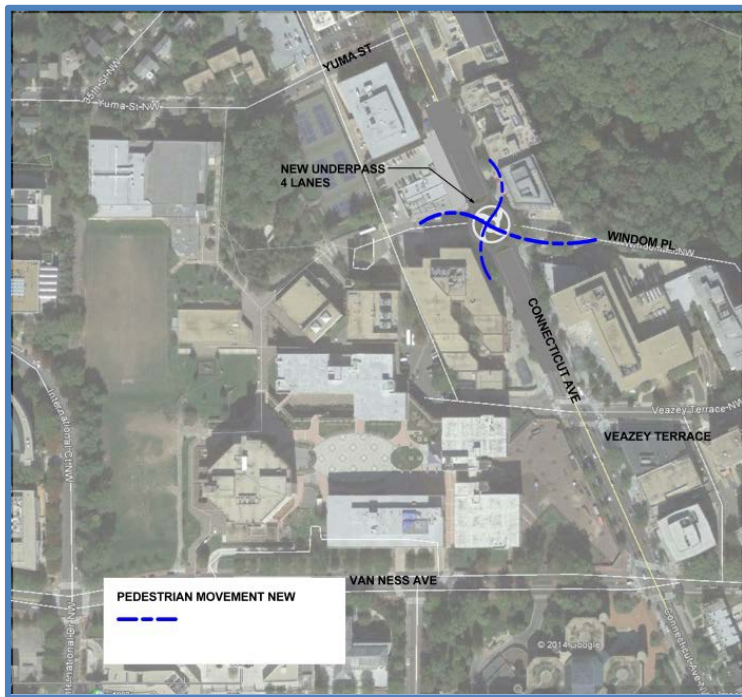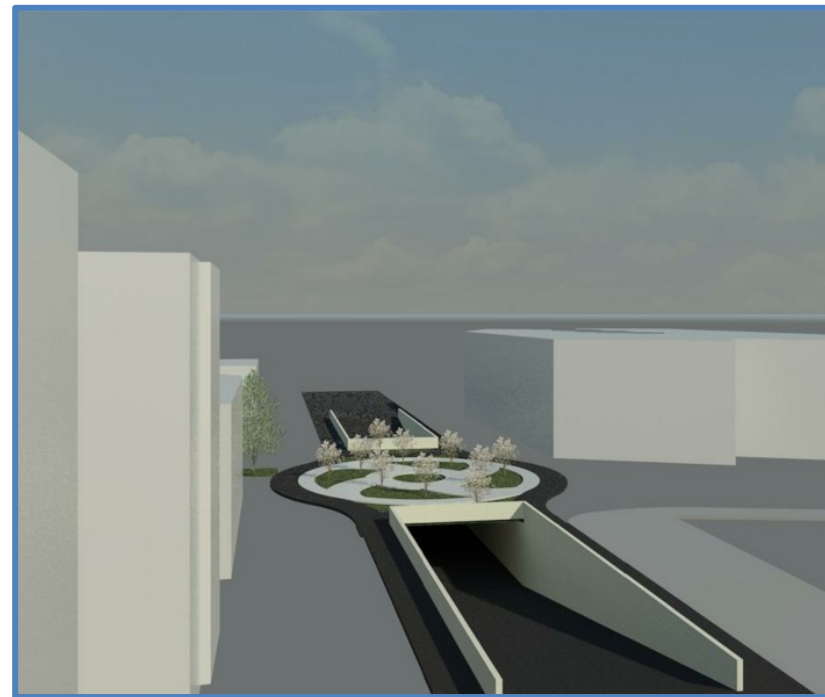

Figure 10 – New Pedestrian Movement

Figure 11 – Proposed Pedestrian Movement

Pedestrian Plazas

To support a sustainable development, a neighborhood needs to provide vibrant pedestrian amenities, such as parks/plazas that can sustain outdoors interaction, creating a more enjoyable and walkable neighborhood for the local residents and visitors of the community.

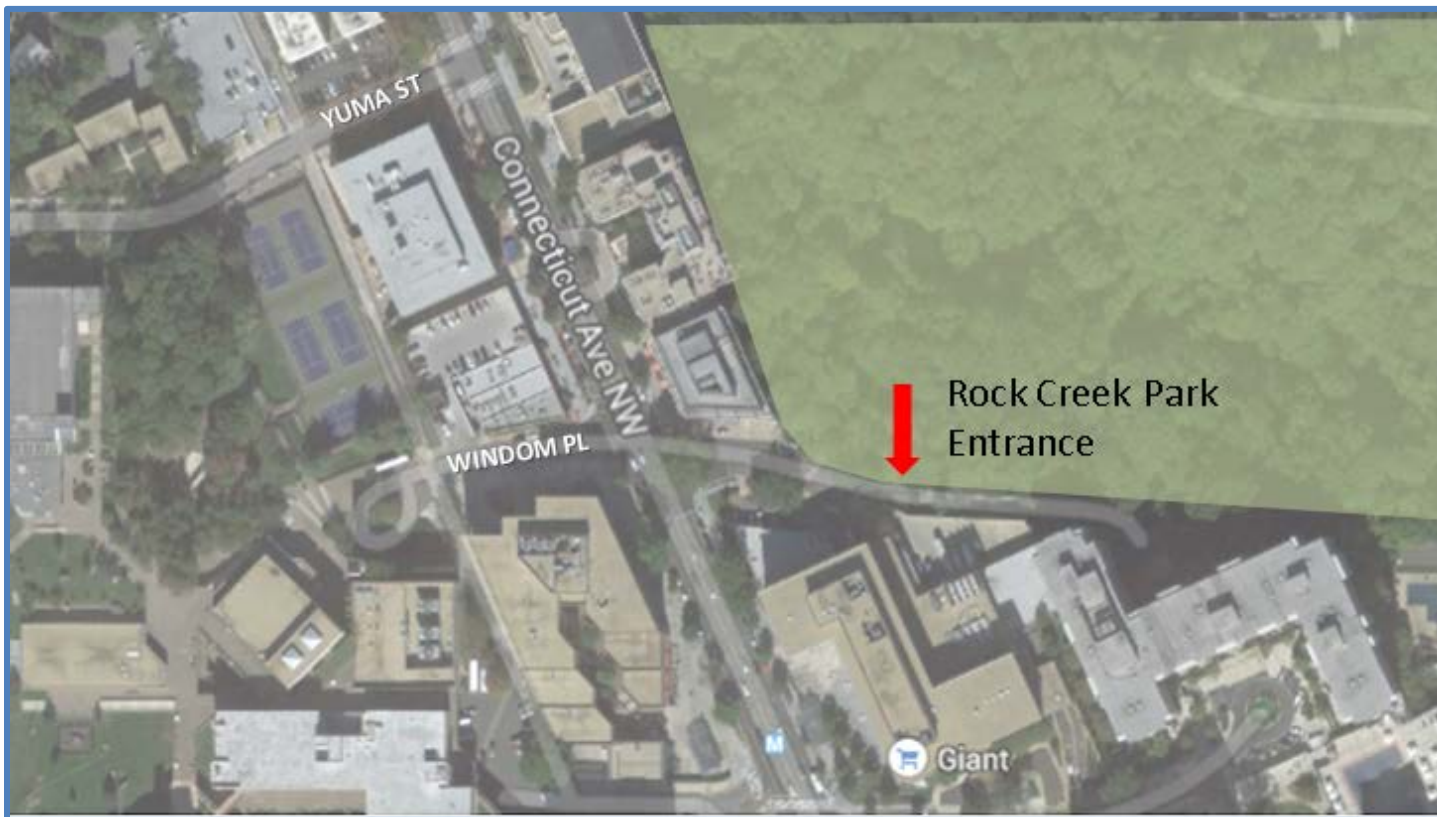The figure below shows the lack of parks/plazas in the area:

Figure 12 – Existing Parks/Plazas

Soapstone Valley Park

Soapstone Valley is one of the finest trails in Rock Creek Park, traversed by a couple of hikers, an occasional homeowner with an unleashed dog, and no one else. The trailhead on Albemarle Street NW—about a block east of the Connecticut Avenue intersection—is marked by a Potomac Appalachian Trail Club sign. From there it descends to a riffling creek, a tributary of Broad Branch that looks positively unpolluted in the right light. The trail follows the creek for a bit and then you cross it by hopping the stones (probably granite, since most of the actual soapstone was quarried out some time ago). You'll crisscross the creek seven or so more times as the valley grows deeper, greener, and denser. Soapstone Valley and the trail ends, spitting you out at Broad Branch Road after a mile-and-a-half. A quick dogleg across lanes of traffic and you can hook up with the Western Ridge Trail, which, in turn, connects with the Valley Trail and continues on up to the northern part of the park. From there, loop back and end the hike with another happy hopscotch through Soapstone Valley.

The only park in the neighborhood, and despite its magnitude, possesses a hidden and narrow entrance that does not invite residents to enjoy it. (See pictures below)

Our approach was to design a boulevard that connects both sides of the intersection at Connecticut Ave. and Windom Pl, with plazas strategically located as ending points, perhaps as smooth connectors with other recreational amenities in the area.
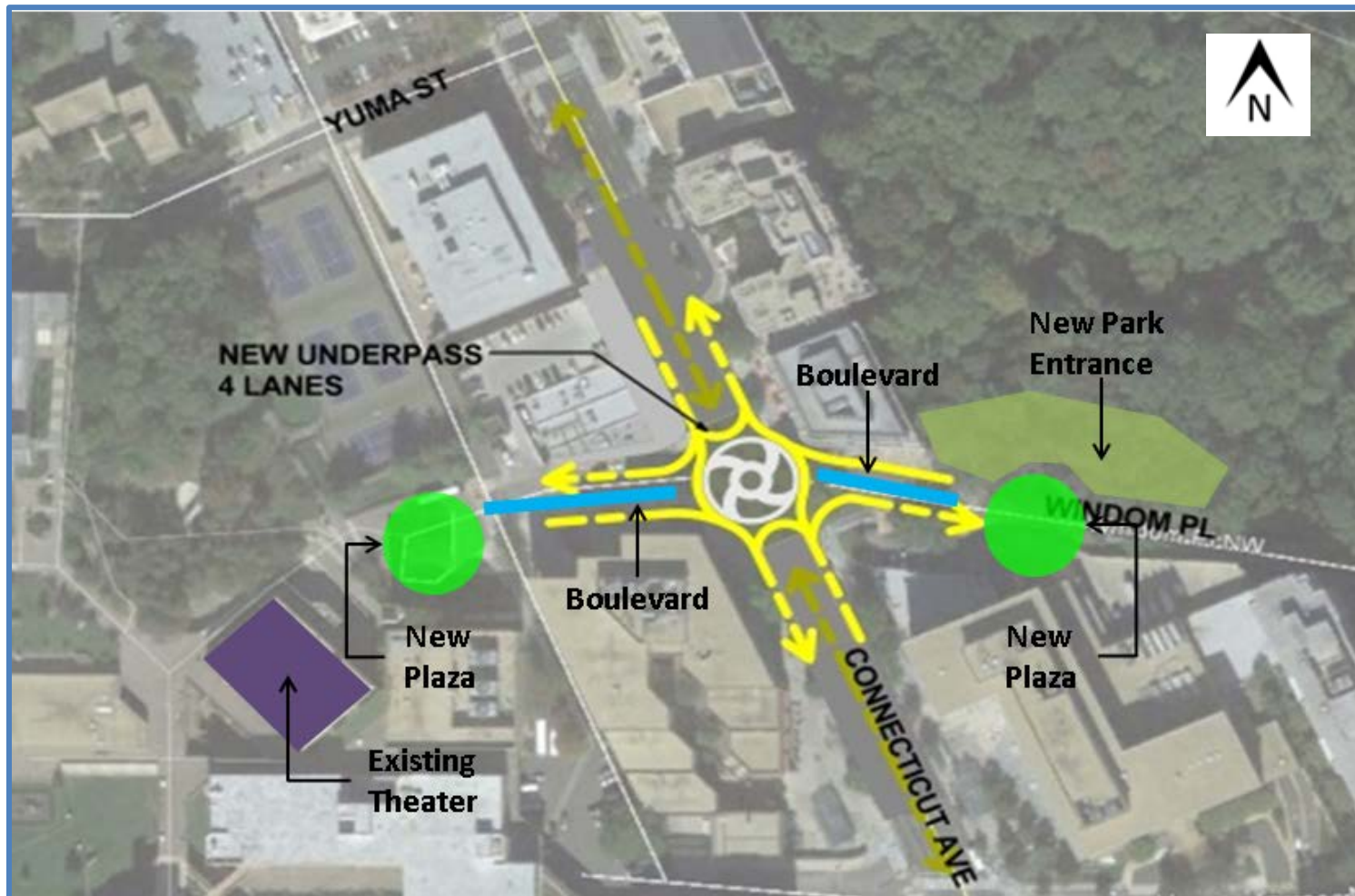

Figure 13 – Proposed Boulevards/Plazas

Connect the park to the street

Effort to link the existing park to the existing street was achieved by introducing the following:

- Entourage plaza softwood lumber columns on either side of the street at about 20 feet interval.

- Structural steel framing arch of considerate height of about 12 feet attached to connect each adjacent softwood lumber column. The arches provide a human scale to vast openness of the site. They will also offer shading with growing vines in the summer.

- Each softwood lumber column is also designed to carry a decorative copper LED lamb {see drawings for more clarification}

- Deciduous Cherry Japanese trees of average height and sizes were introduced to run along either side of the street curb starting from the beginning of the street to the end of the street.

- Wood benches at certain interval to run along the street on either side.

This will a sort of invite or create awareness to the residence as well as the entire neighborhood in the area.

Boulevard Precedent: ReTrac Plaza in Reno, NV

Boulevard Precedent: Las Ramblas in Barcelona, Spain

Expand Retail Options

Towards North on Connecticut Avenue, there are two existing buildings on NW and SE of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Windom Pl. and are both one story buildings.

Based on zoning regulations in our new urban development design of this area, we are proposing a mixed used building on both locations implementing maximum height usage for these two buildings.

Existing Buildings
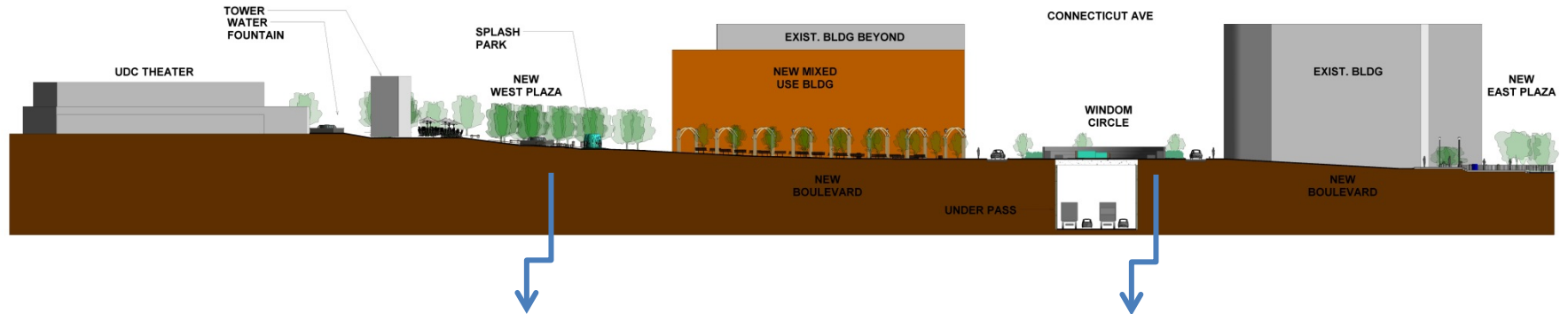

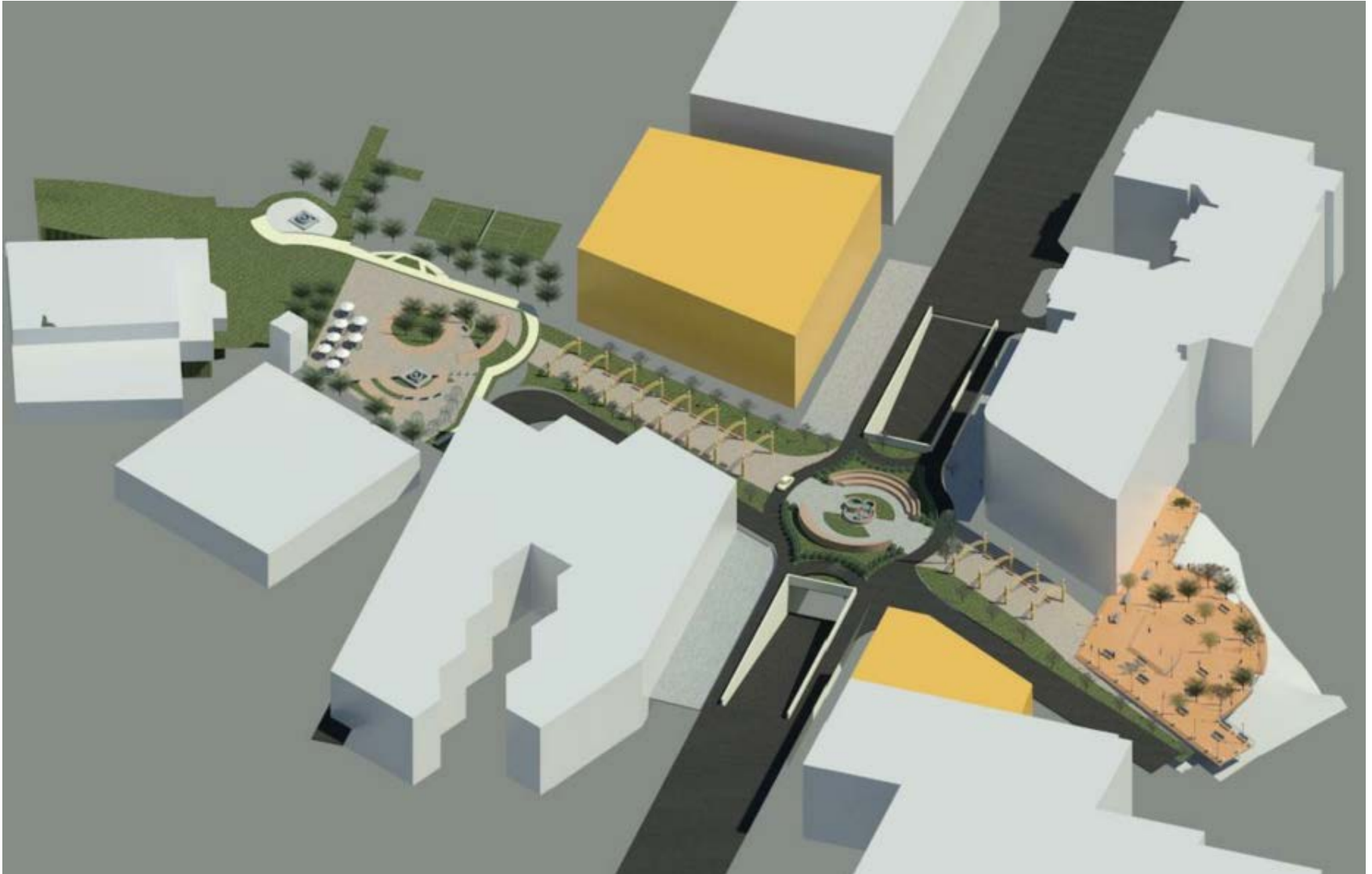**Existing Building on NW (Potbelly)**

Existing Building on SW (Grocery Store)

Design Proposal – Site Plan

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Design Proposal – Section

Design Proposal – Perspective

Reference / Footnotes / Bibliography

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