

STARR WHITEHOUSE

Landscape Architects
and Planners PLLC

Park Ave Vision Plan

CB 5 Presentation - Concept Design

Landscape Architecture +
Urban Design Services

May 28, 2026

01

Project Overview

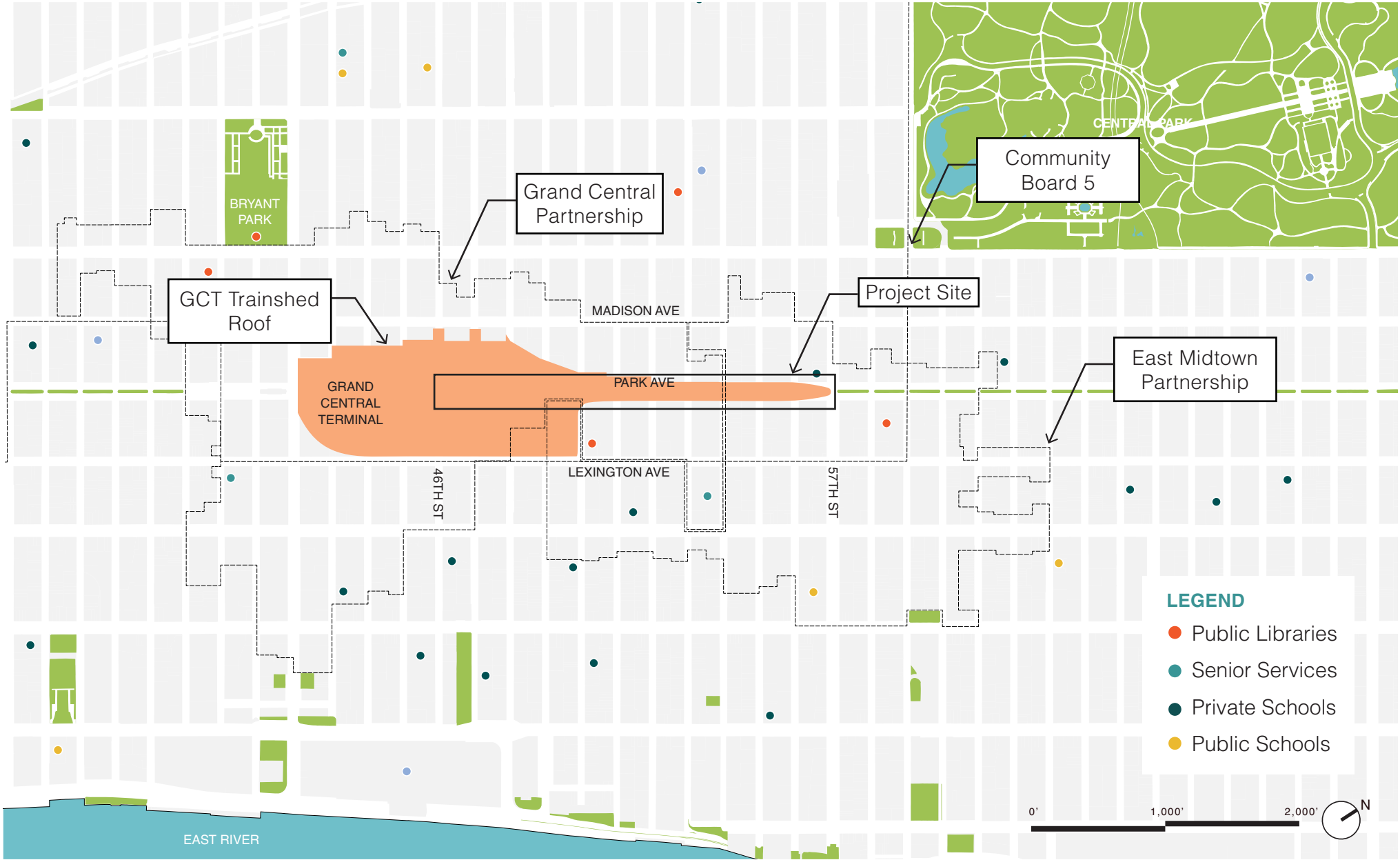
Project Site + Context

PROJECT OVERVIEW



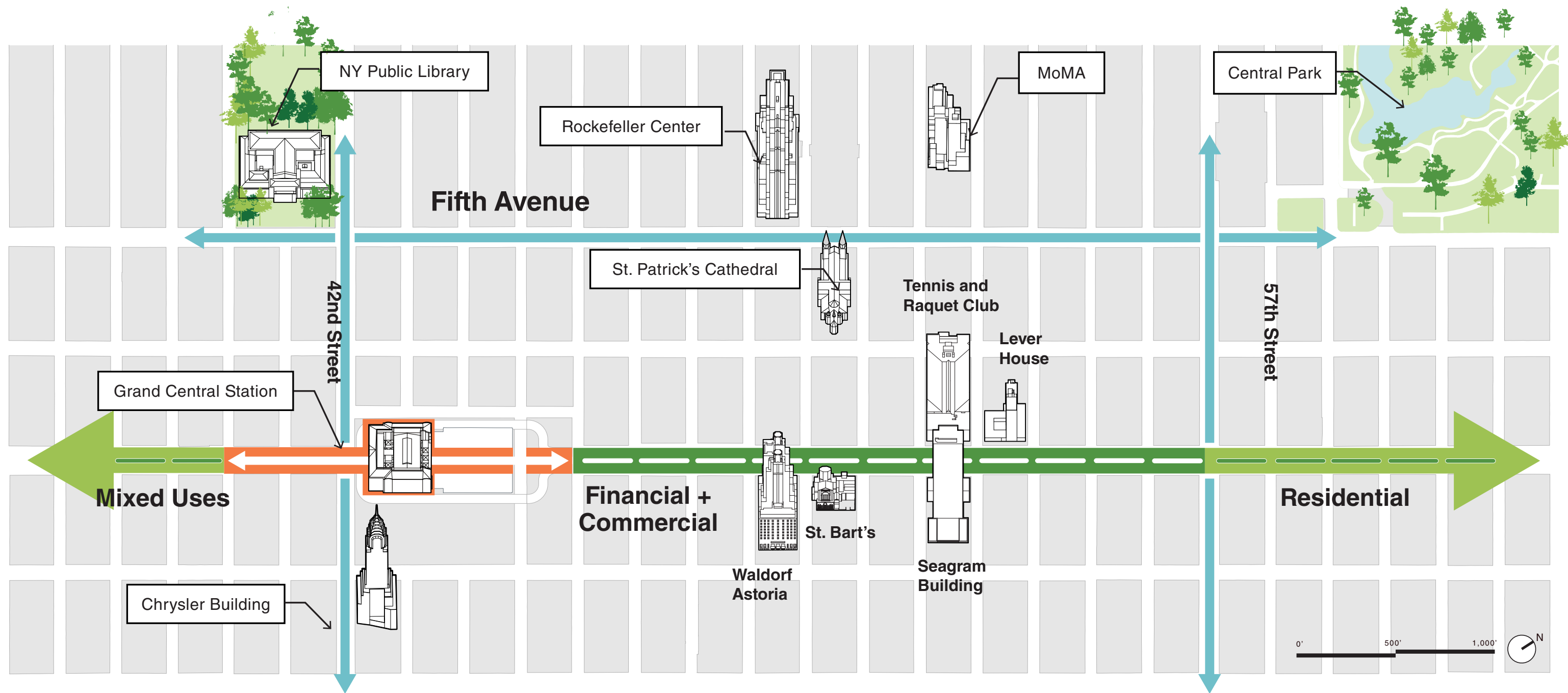
The project is in East Midtown, Manhattan.

The site includes the assessment area of two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) the Grand Central Partnership (GCP) and the East Midtown Partnership (EMP).



Project Area

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Park Avenue is a linear public space that extends north and south of Grand Central Terminal and links midtown landmarks to important Manhattan open spaces.

Existing Site Plan

PROJECT OVERVIEW



The project area is a 0.55-mile corridor over 11 city blocks with 23 adjacent buildings and one currently vacant lot. The project area is from 46th Street to 57th Street.

Proposed Site Plan

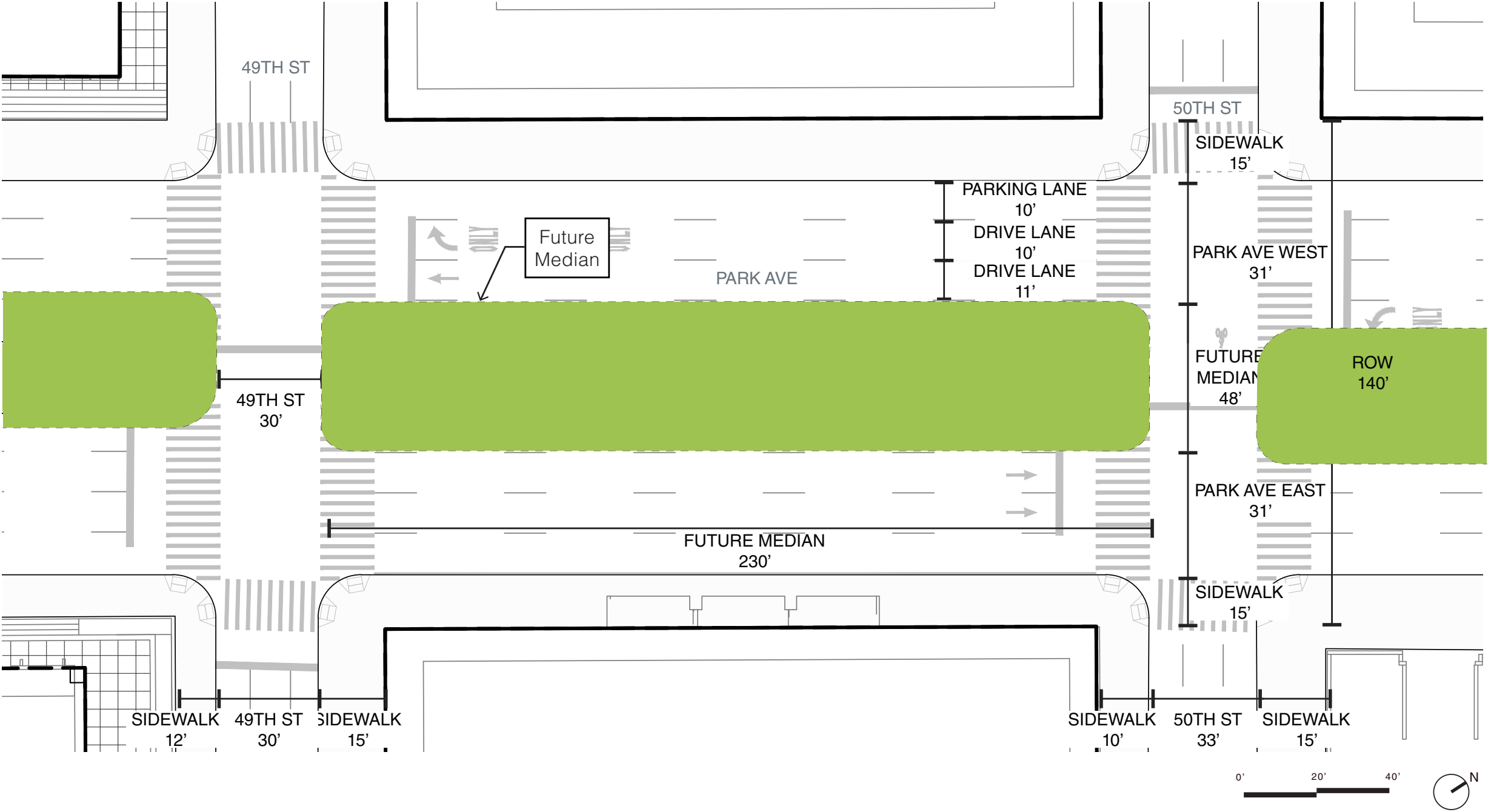
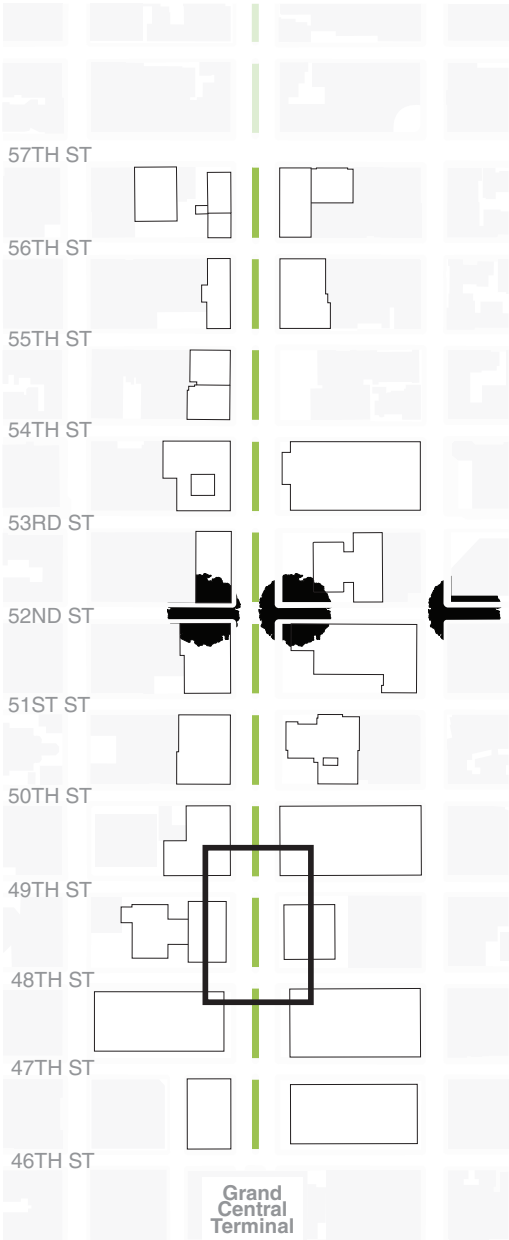
PROJECT OVERVIEW



The proposed design narrows the street by one lane in each direction, allowing the medians to expand to 38 feet for turning lane medians and 48 feet for full medians, accommodating new programmatic spaces and north-south pedestrian crosswalks connecting the medians.

Future Typical Median Dimensions

PROJECT OVERVIEW



The future median will be approximately 230' x 48'.

Bicycle Infrastructure

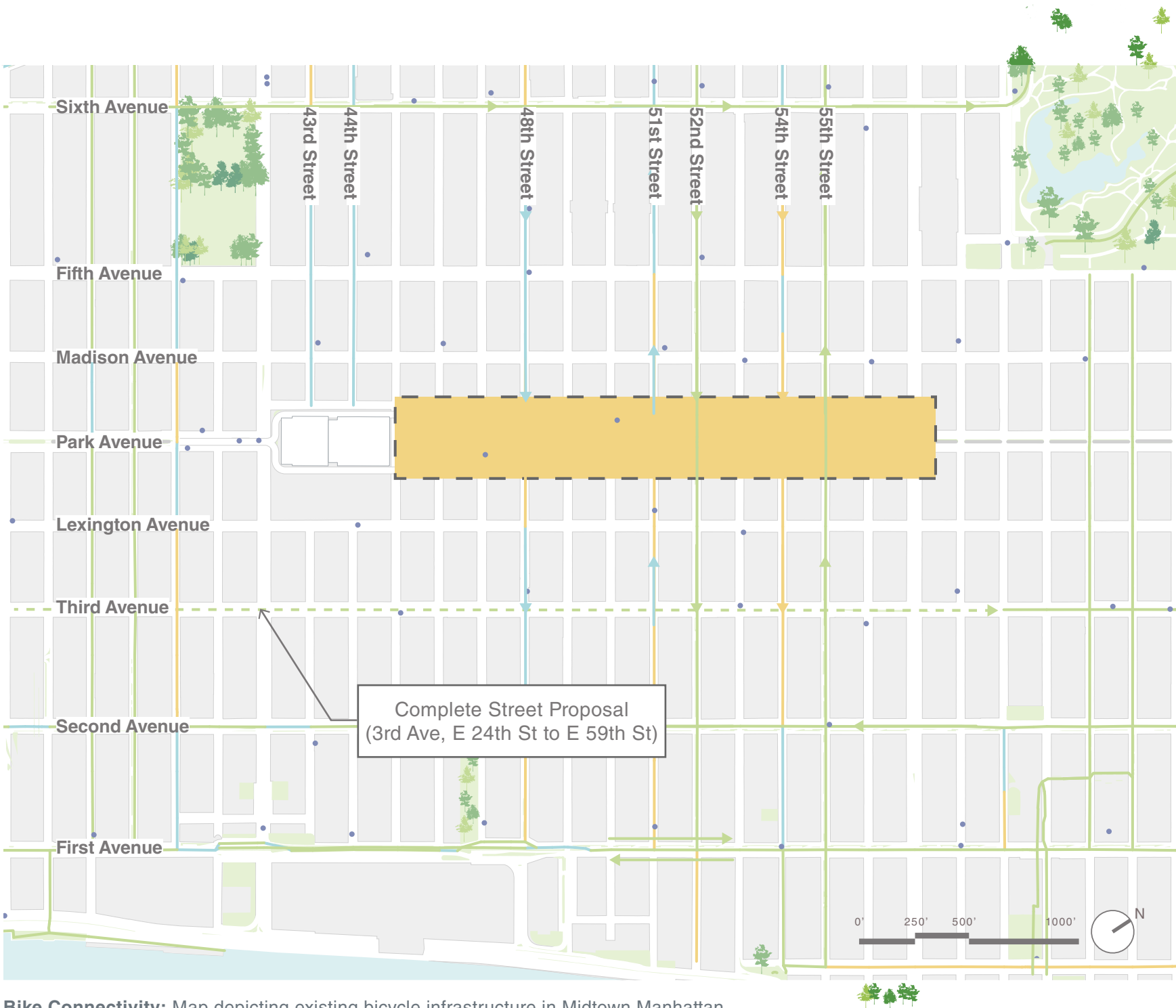
PROJECT OVERVIEW

The evaluation of bicycle infrastructure needs in Midtown is structured around two primary components:

- **Multi-modal Transportation:** Balancing the needs of all modes including vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, is an opportunity with the expanded malls and is also being evaluated in context of the broader East Midtown neighborhood.
- **Bike Connectivity:** Proposed bike improvements are being studied in relation to the existing and planned bike network in East Midtown to better understand connectivity, constraints, and opportunities for safe cycling infrastructure

LEGEND

-  Study Area
-  Citi Bike Station
-  Protected Bike Lane
-  Conventional Bike Lane
-  Shared Bike Lane

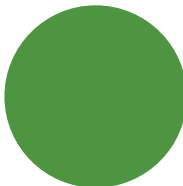
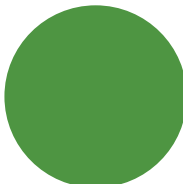
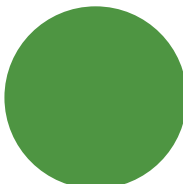


Bike Connectivity: Map depicting existing bicycle infrastructure in Midtown Manhattan.

Engagement Tracking

PROJECT OVERVIEW

As of May 2026, the project team has conducted:

-  **Community Workshop**, attended by 20 participants including residents and tenants along the corridor.
-  **Stakeholder Interviews**, including 45 individuals from 15 represented organizations.
-  **Agency group and community board meetings**, reaching approximately 135 individuals.
-  **Meetings with local governing groups** including the Grand Central Partnership, East Midtown Partnership, and The Fund for Park Avenue.
-  **Public surveys** gathering ~3000 responses from community members.
-  **Public Tabling Events** on 4 locations along Park Avenue gathering public feedback on concept designs.

Engagement Tracking | Takeaways

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project team recognizes engagement as a critical and ongoing piece of the Park Avenue Vision Plan. Current outreach efforts have included stakeholders, local governing groups, and community members along the corridor.

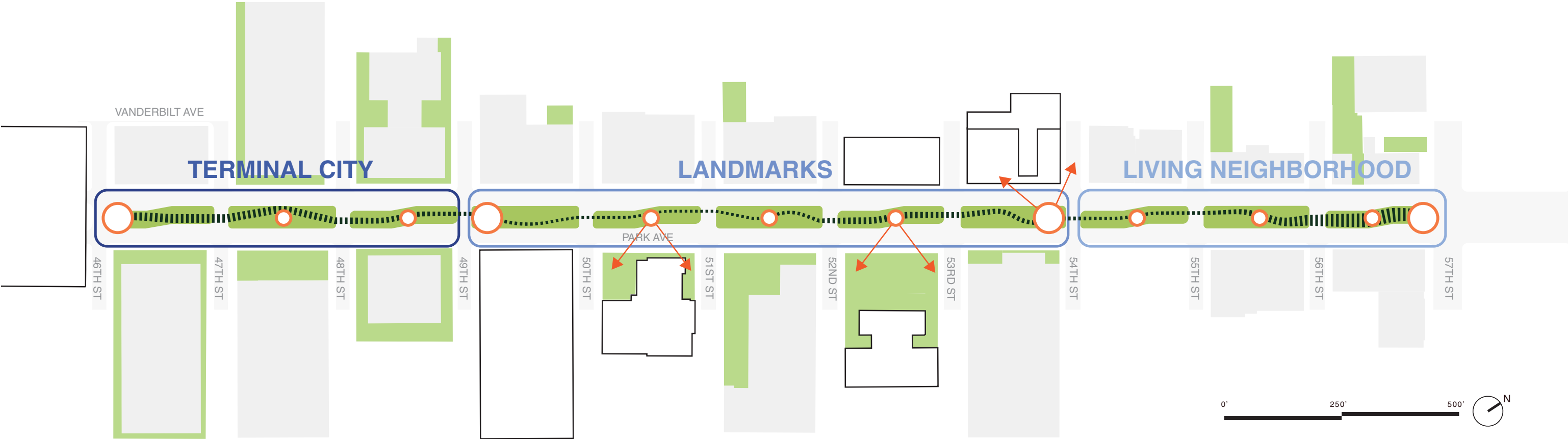
- **Pedestrian Mobility:** Stakeholders and community members expressed overwhelming interest in a pedestrian-friendly median design that would benefit residents, workers, and visitors.
- **Bicycle Mobility:** Some community members expressed interest in having bike lane through this corridor since there is no bikeway on Fifth Avenue. However, opposition to the bike lane has also been expressed by many community members.
- **Horticultural Richness:** Nearly all engaged parties noted the opportunity to expand Park Avenue's iconic plantings. There was a general desire to keep the seasonal displays in some form and to seize the opportunity of wider and deeper plant beds to add High Line-like plant communities for visual interest and biodiversity. Building owners requested that the taller plantings be selected judiciously to maintain views of the specific iconic buildings.
- **Programming:** Participants expressed interest in using the median as event space for tenants, as well as incorporating public art. Participants discussed the various uses of the corridor during different times of the year such as weekends, nights, and holidays.
- **Maintenance:** Stakeholders and community members emphasized the need for a single maintenance entity to sustain the horticultural and programming ambitions.

02

Design Framework

Corridor Framework

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

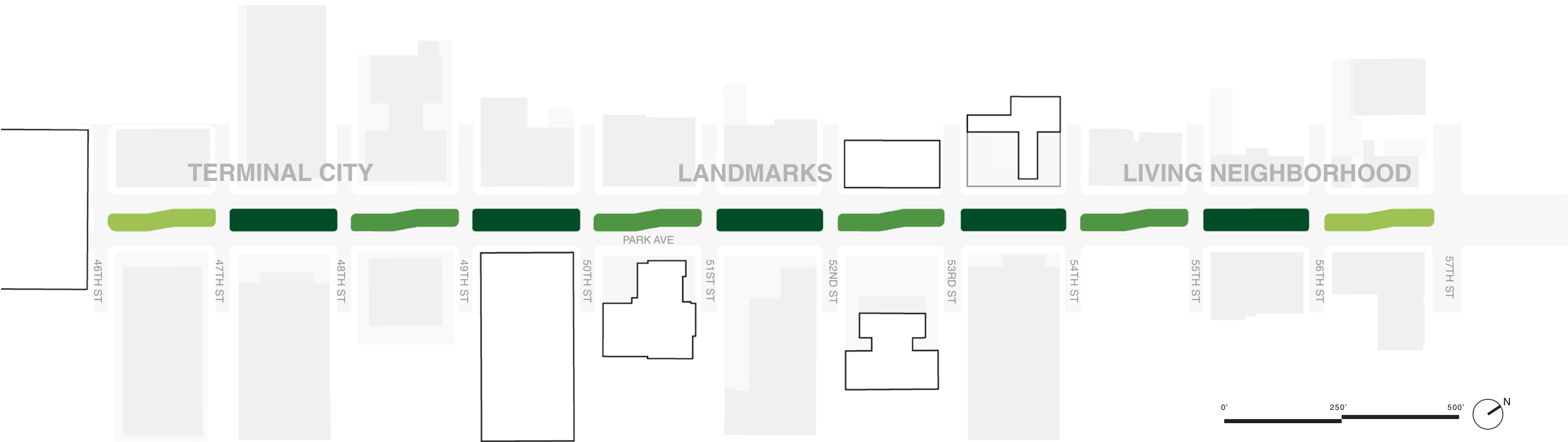


The proposed design framework organizes the corridor into three zones: Terminal City, Landmarks, and Living Neighborhood. This is unified by a continuous green ribbon with meandering paths that connect key destinations and design features.

- LEGEND**
- Existing Plazas and Gardens
 - Future Median
 - Design Features
 - Meandering path

Corridor Median Typologies

DESIGN FRAMEWORK



Medians are organized as a rhythmic sequence along the corridor.

Entry Medians mark moments of arrival and serve as welcoming gateways to the corridor.

Transitional Medians provide continuity between the three zones and connect to key destinations.

Formal Medians establish intentional spaces for celebration, gathering and respite, highlighting defining features that reinforce the corridor’s identity.

LEGEND

- Entry Medians
- Transitional Medians
- Formal Medians

Median Layers

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

PATHS

Circulation routes will be organized to support pedestrian and bicycle movement, ensuring accessibility and safety.

DESTINATIONS

The medians will offer compelling reasons to pass through or linger - featuring spaces for respite, views, public art and seasonal programming.

HORTICULTURE

A layered planting strategy - incorporating canopy, understory, groundcover and seasonal species - will define distinct zones, enhance ecological value and create a variety of experiences.

03

Concept Design

Corridor Design

CONCEPT DESIGN



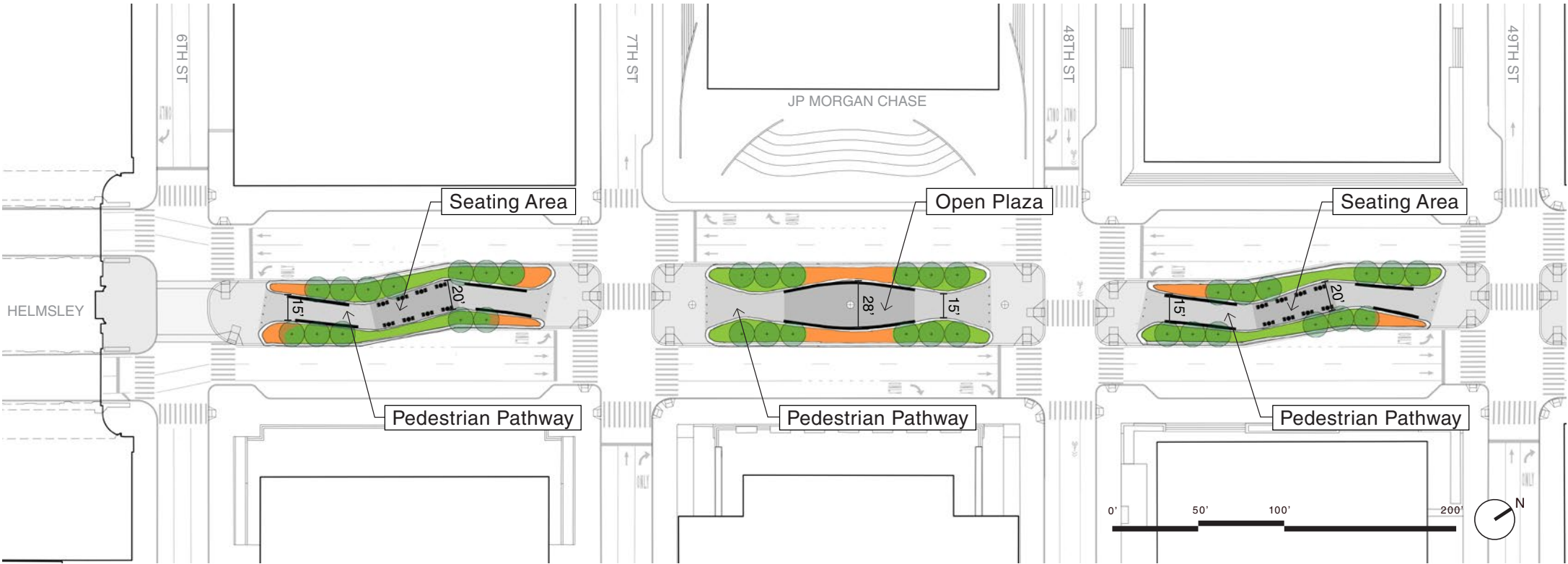
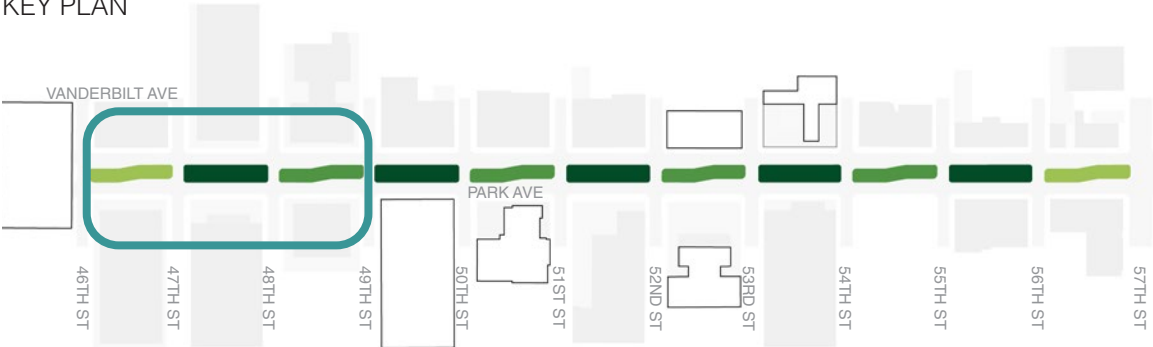
LEGEND

- Planting
- Seasonal Planting
- Seating
- Public Art

Zone 1: Terminal City

CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN



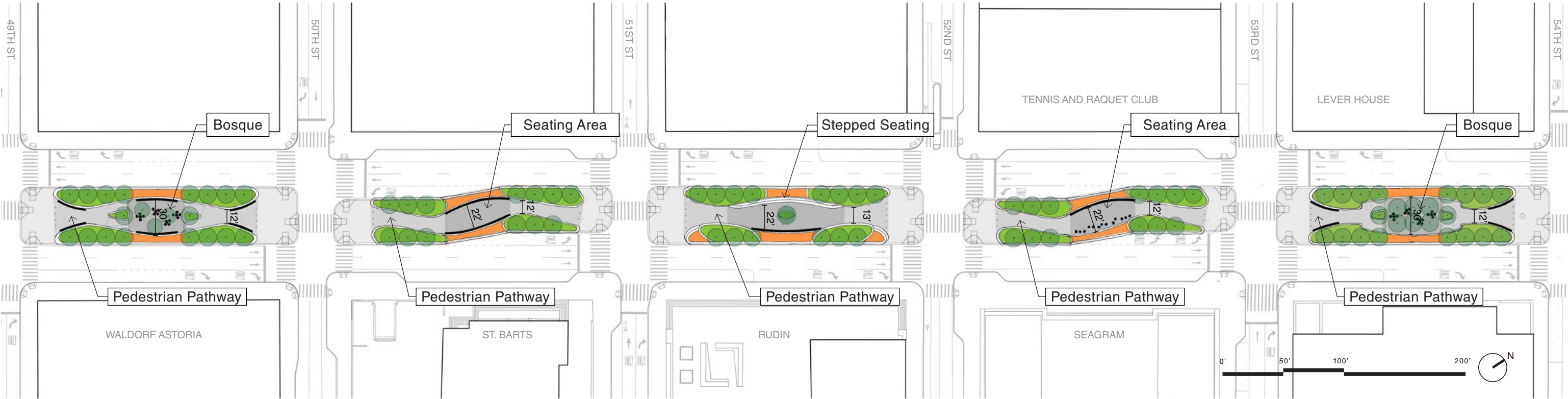
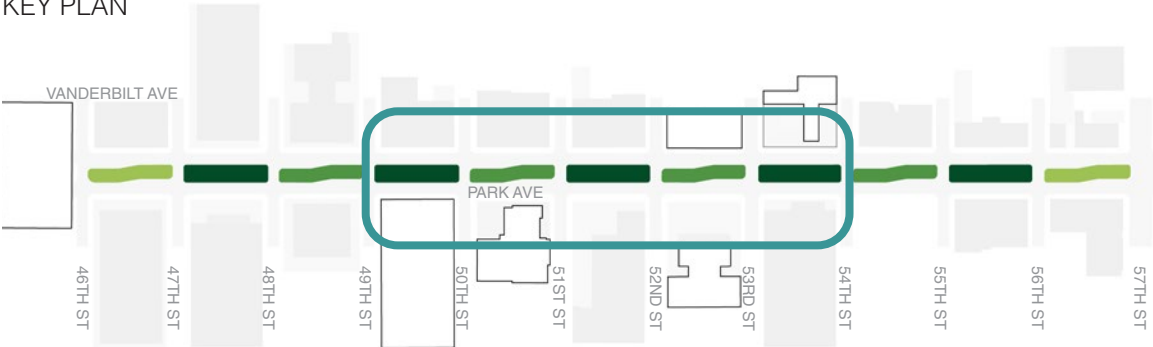
LEGEND

- Planting
- Seasonal Planting
- Seating
- Public Art

Zone 2: Landmarks

CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN



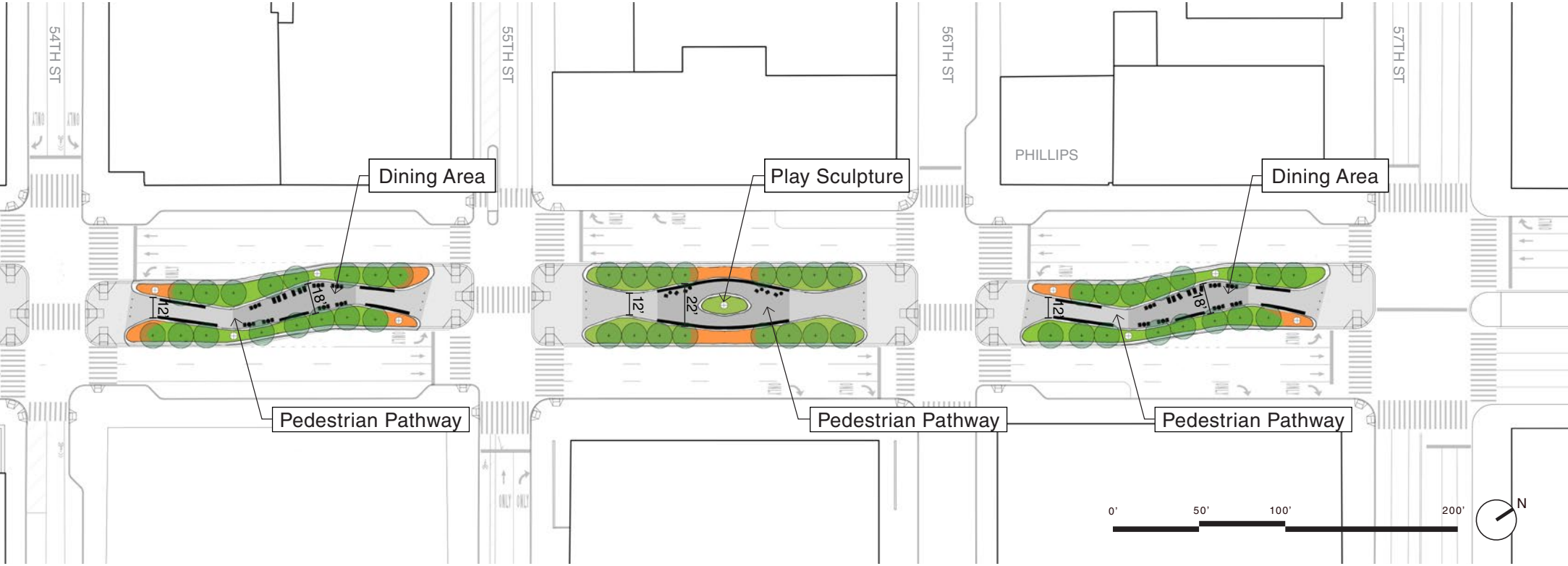
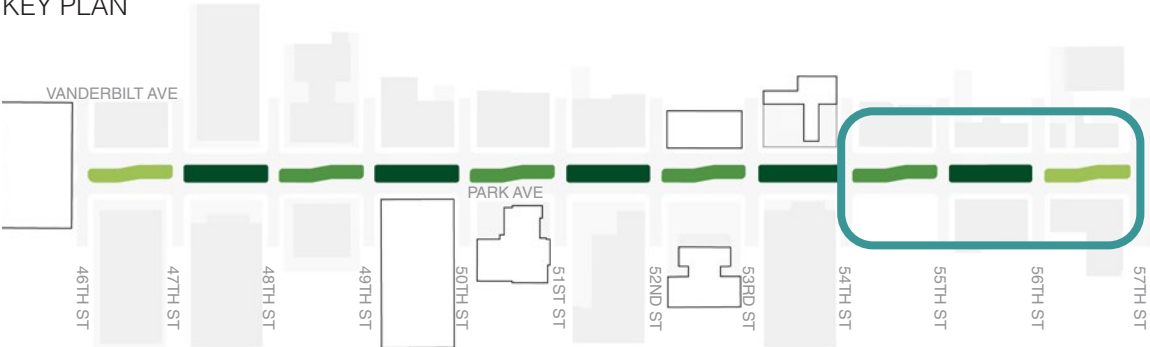
LEGEND

Planting	Seating
Seasonal Planting	Public Art

Zone 3: Living Neighborhood

CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN

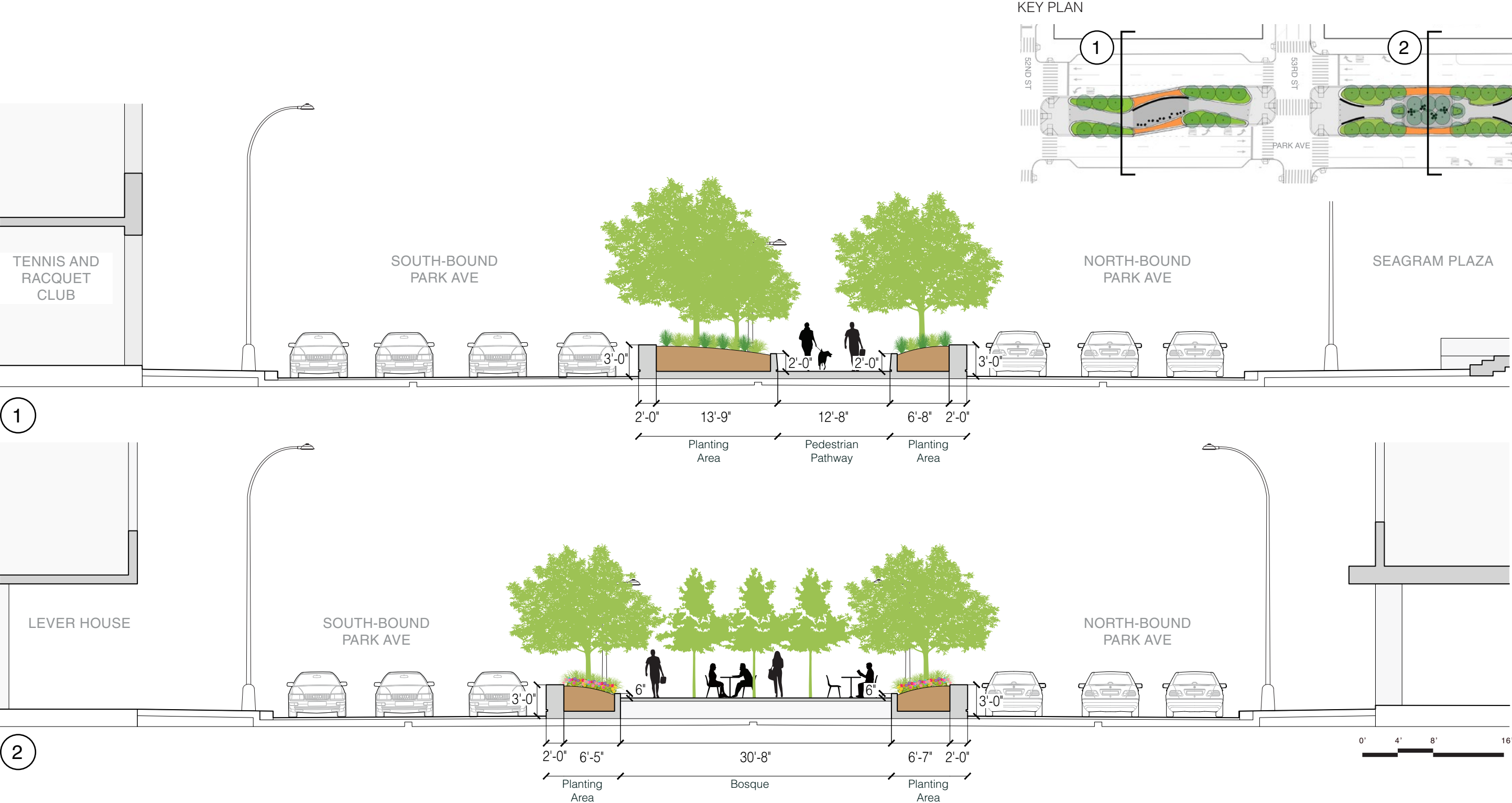


LEGEND

- Planting
- Seasonal Planting
- Seating
- Public Art

Typical Median Section

CONCEPT DESIGN



Aerial View Looking North from 51st St

CONCEPT DESIGN



Corridor Design with Bike Lane

CONCEPT DESIGN

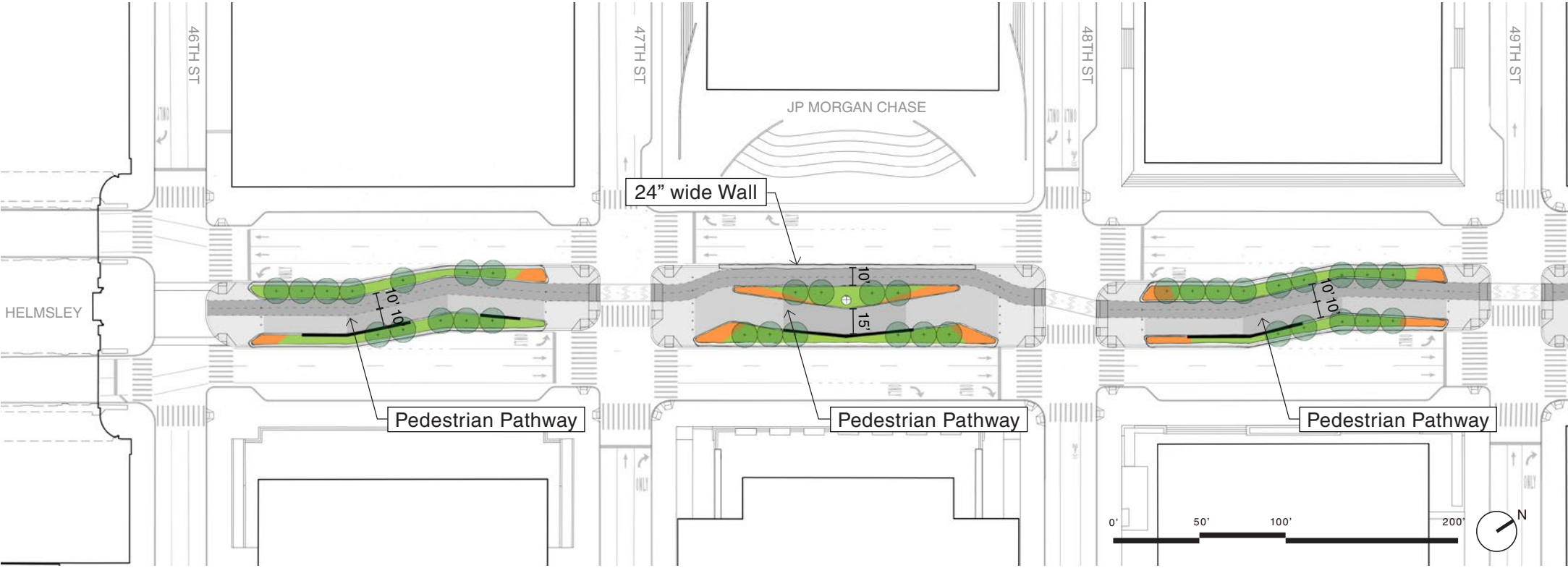
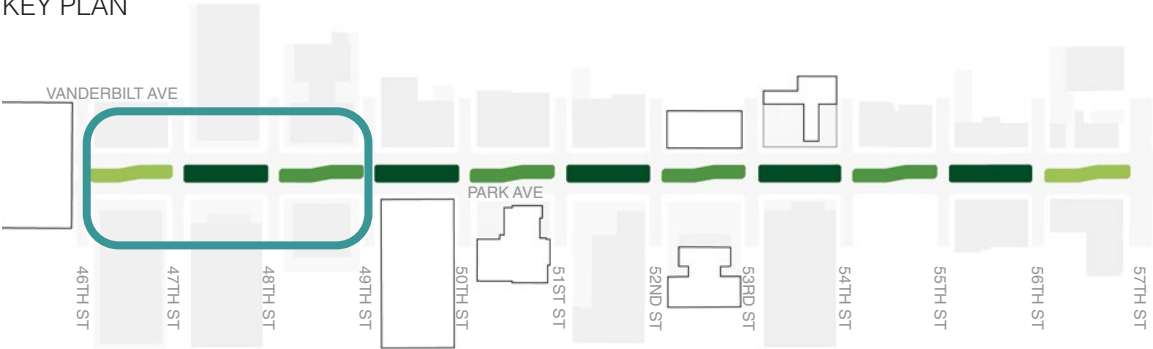


- LEGEND
- Planting
 - Seasonal Planting
 - Seating
 - Public Art
 - Existing Shared Bike Lane
 - Existing Protected Bike Lane
 - Future Connection

Zone 1: Terminal City

CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN



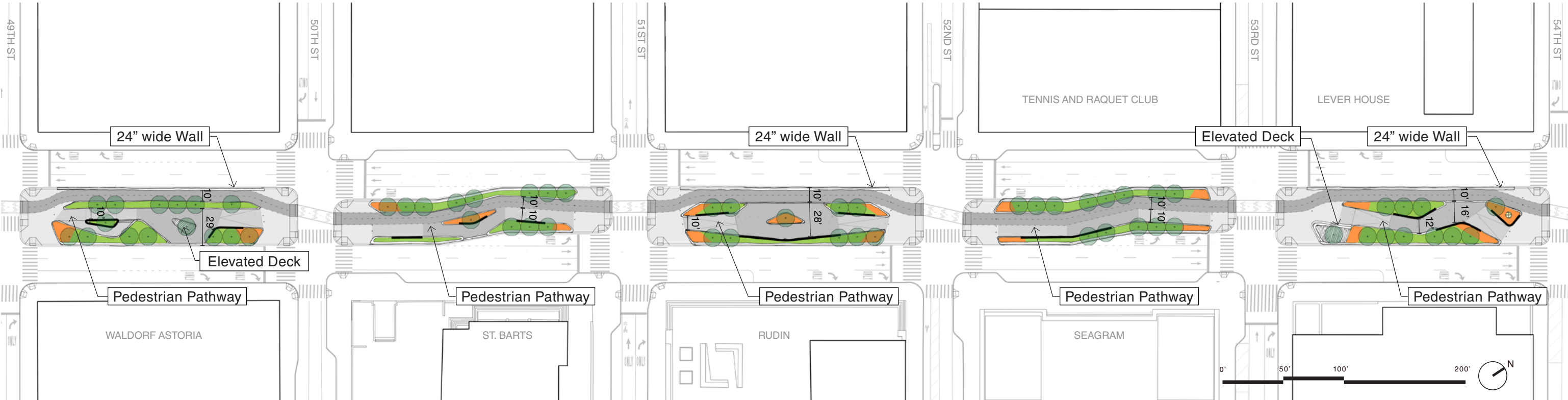
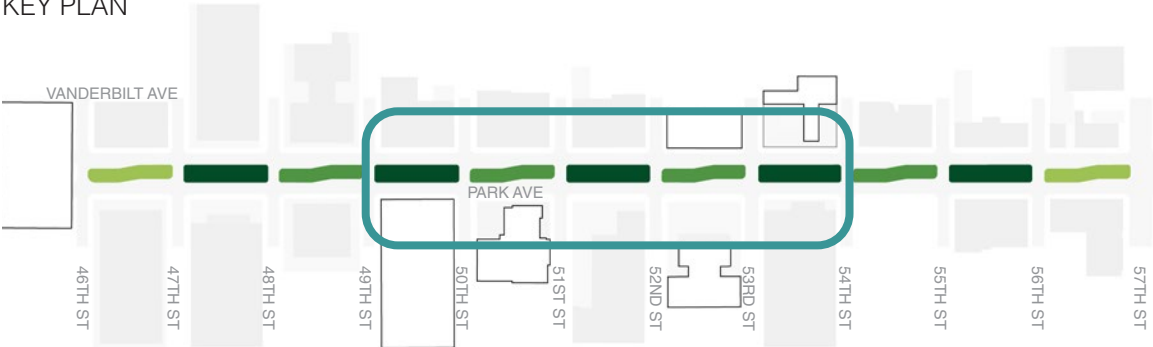
LEGEND

- Planting
- Seasonal Planting
- Seating
- Public Art

Zone 2: Landmarks

CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN



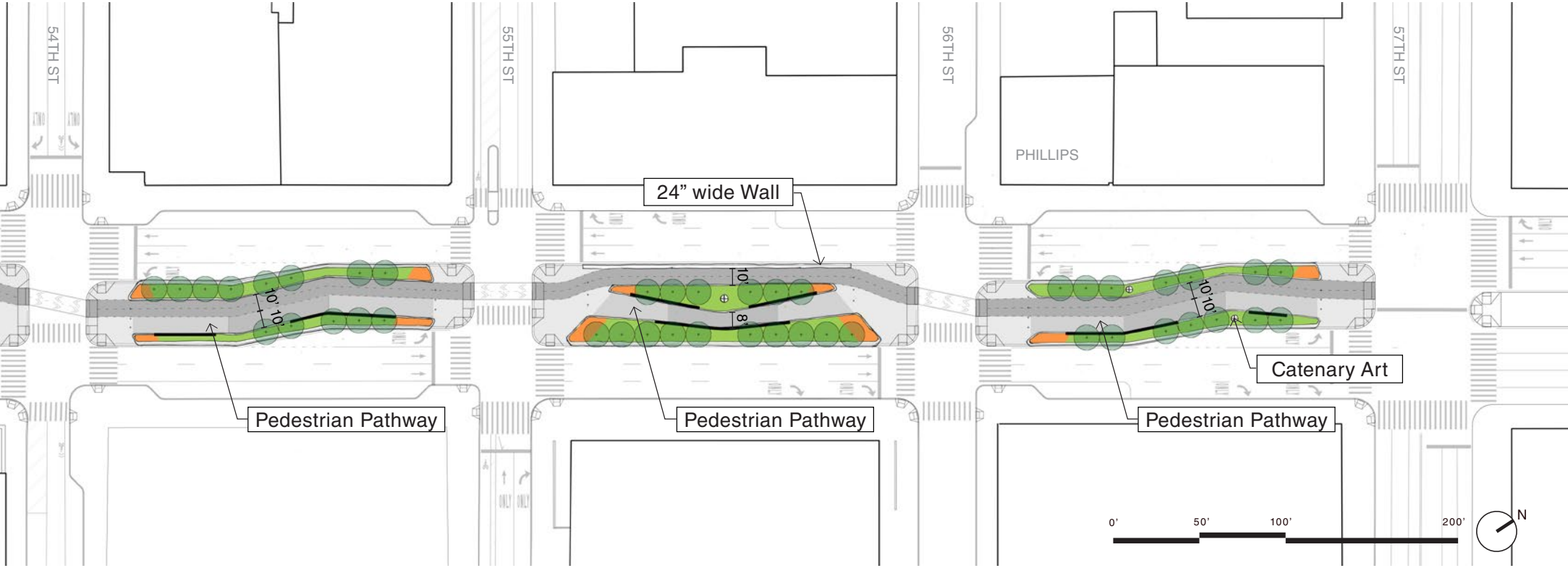
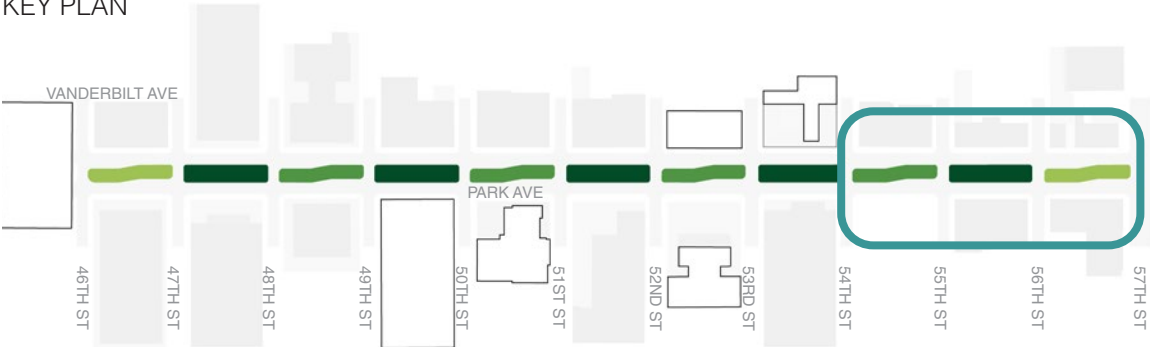
LEGEND

Planting	Seating
Seasonal Planting	Public Art

Zone 3: Living Neighborhood

CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN

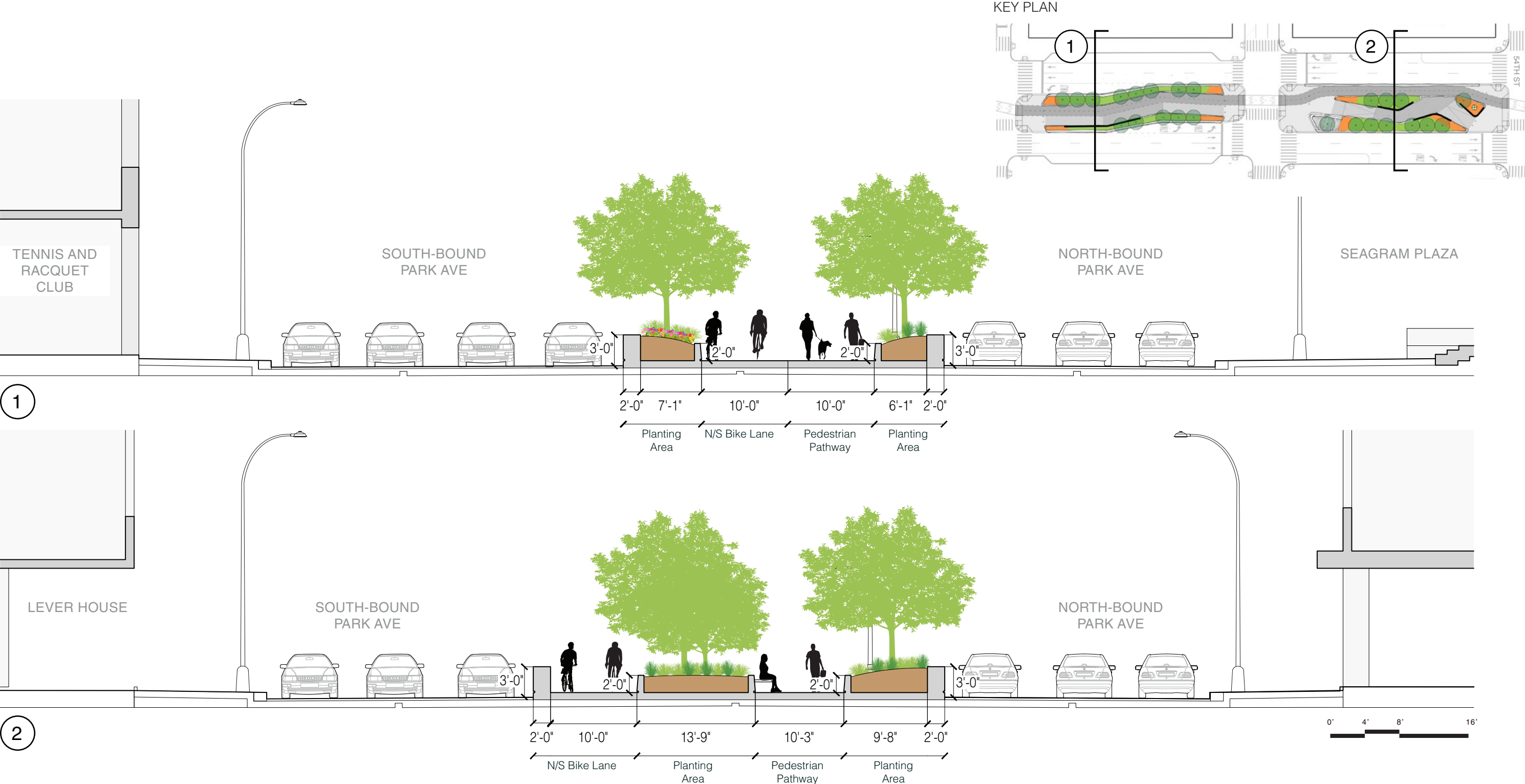


LEGEND

- Planting
- Seasonal Planting
- Seating
- Public Art

Typical Median Section

CONCEPT DESIGN



Aerial View Looking North from 51st St

CONCEPT DESIGN



04

Material Toolkit

Kit of Parts

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



CURBS



PAVING



BOLLARDS



LIGHTING



SEATING



TEMPORARY
PUBLIC ART



WAYFINDING



UTILITIES



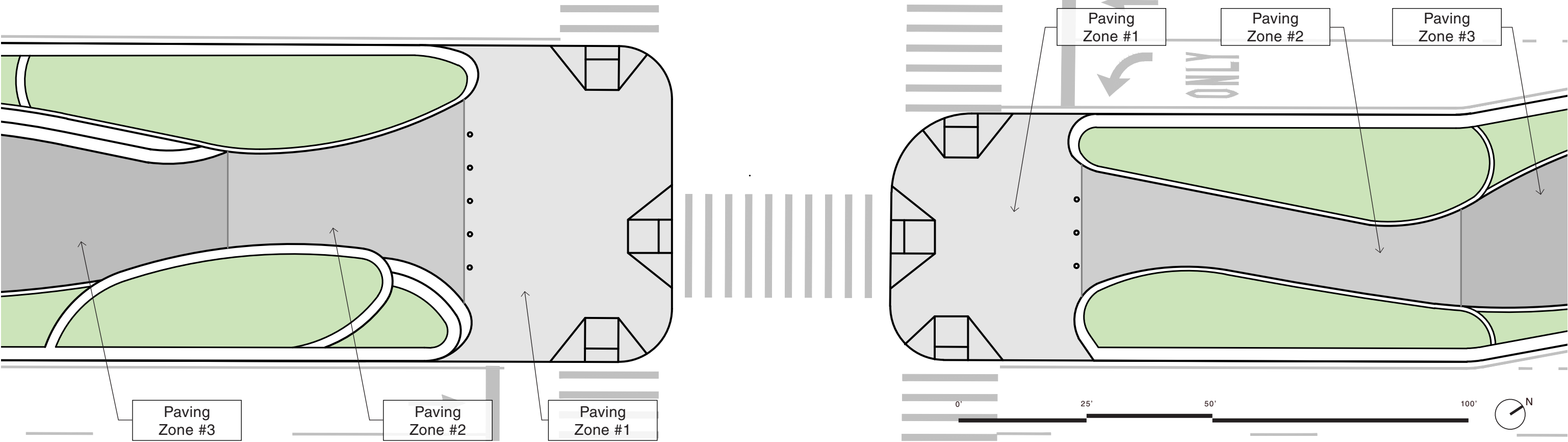
PLANTING



PLANTER WALLS

Paving | Without Bike Lane

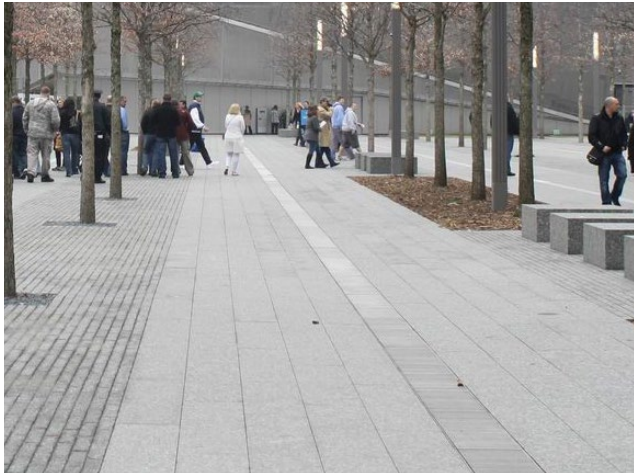
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



The paving intends to define a cohesive strategy for the median exploring variations of tone, texture, and scale. The materials will reinforce spatial hierarchy, define circulation, and improve the overall user experience. Materials such as cast-in-place concrete, precast concrete pavers, and granite are being explored. Consistent size and color of pavers enhance the formal design.



Large format pavers
Greenpoint Landing



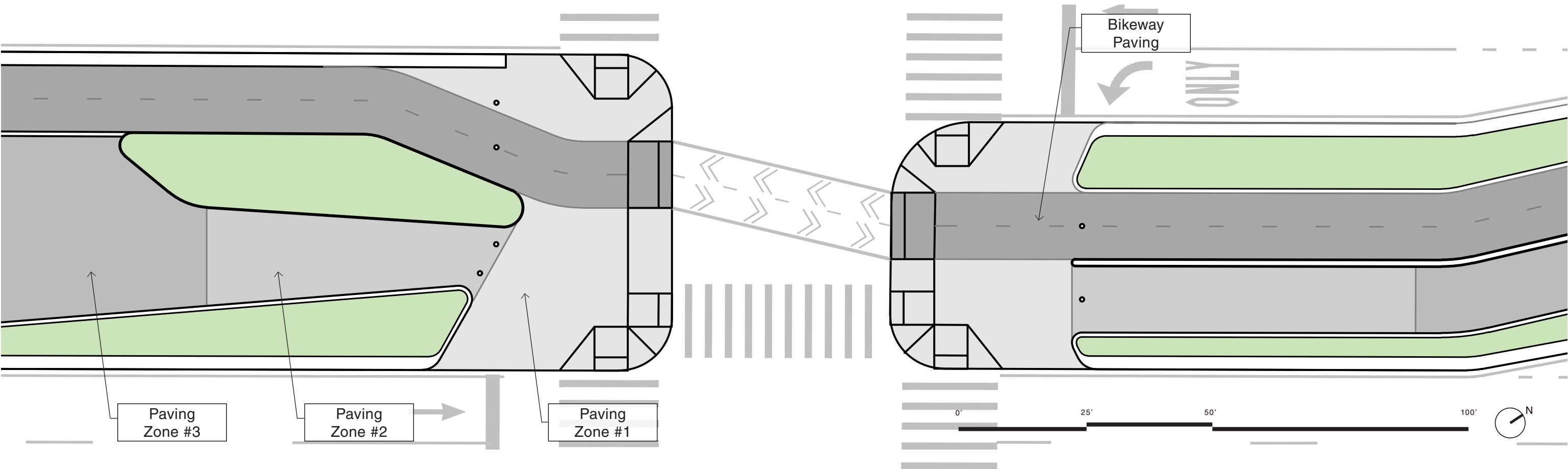
Small and medium plank pavers
World Trade Center Memorial



Small pavers, color variation
Hudson River Park

Paving | With Bike Lane

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



The paving intends to define a cohesive strategy for the median exploring variations of tone, texture, and scale. The materials will reinforce spatial hierarchy, define circulation, and improve the overall user experience. Materials such as cast-in-place concrete, precast concrete pavers, and granite are being explored. The bike lane is defined by a paving contrast of size and color.



Small pavers, color variation
Ilsan WI CITY, Goyang, South Korea



Large and medium size pavers
Kaiserplatz square, Düren, Germany



Cast-in-Place Concrete
Union Square Station Plaza, Somerville MA

Existing Lighting

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Street lights along Park Avenue include four different pole and luminaire types. The median between 46th to 49th St is under construction and lit with temporary construction lights. Sidewalk lighting on 46th and 54th St uses Grand Central Partnership poles, transiting to cobrahead fixtures from 54th to 57th St.



Grand Central Partnership pole and luminaire



Double Arm Cobra Head



Single Arm Cobra Head

LEGEND

- Grand Central Partnership Light
- Double Arm Cobra Head
- Single Arm Cobra Head
- Temporary Single Construction Head



Existing Lighting | Grand Central Partnership Pole

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Existing lighting levels across the corridor are being analyzed to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and under-lit areas. Currently, existing Grand Central Partnership poles do not provide adequate illuminance to sidewalks and roadways. The proposed lighting design will include high quality street and pedestrian lighting that meets NYCDOT standards.

	Average Illuminance (fc)	Illuminance Uniformity	Calculation Results (fc)
Roadways			
			AVERAGE = 1.24 AVG/MIN RATIO = 3.10
Local**	0.8 - 1.0	4:1	
Intersections			
Collector/Collector	2.0 - 2.5	4:1	
			AVERAGE = 1.42 AVG/MIN RATIO = 3.55
Local/Local	1.5	4:1	
Plazas, Under the EI	2.0	4:1	
			AVERAGE = 0.66 AVG/MIN RATIO = 3.30

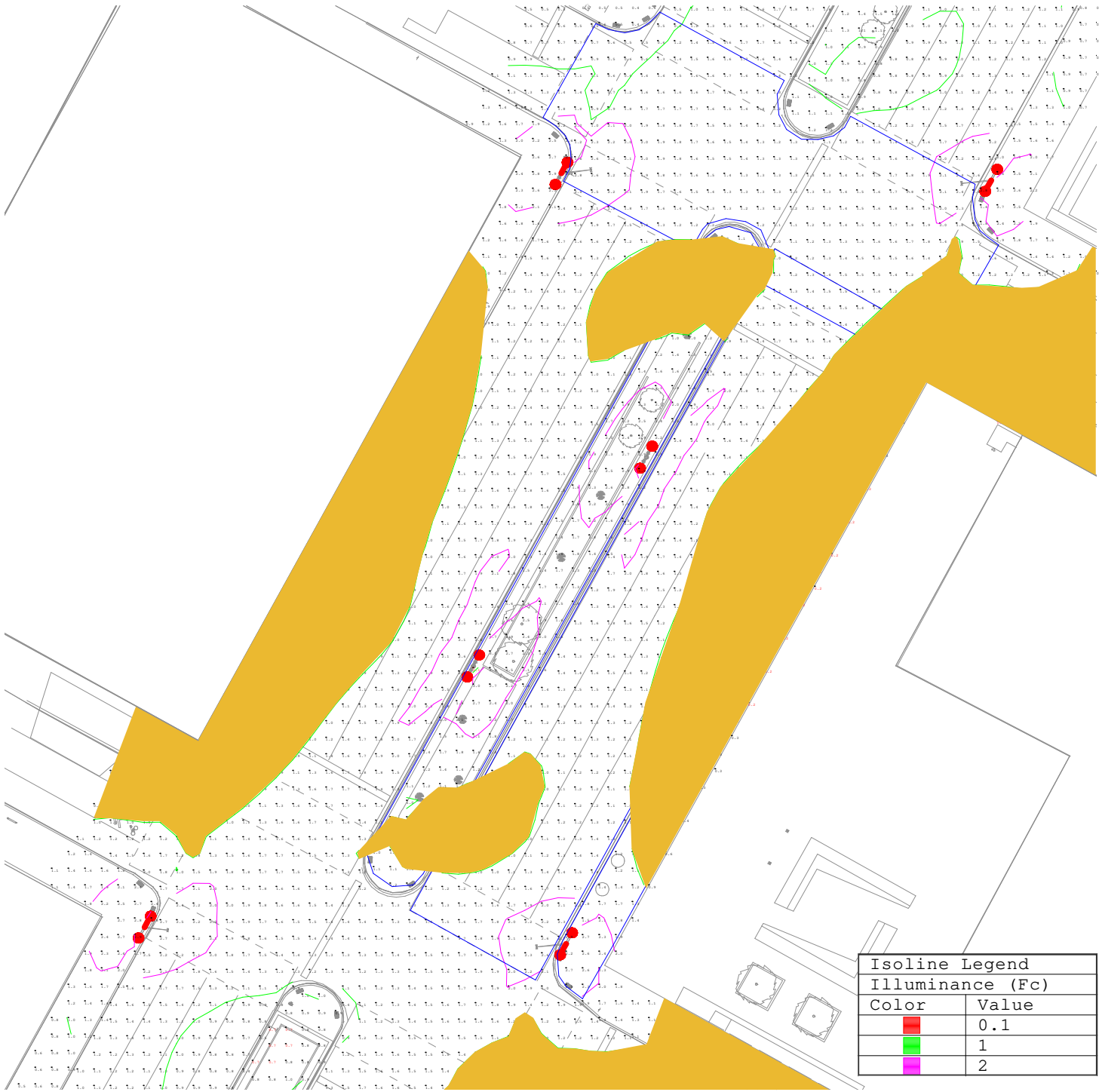
*light spill from adjacent building has not been accounted for the calculations.

Calculation Results:

The layout provides sufficient average foot-candle levels for Roadways and Pedestrian sidewalks. However, illumination levels are lower on Intersection with a minimum of 0.4fc. (1.42fc Avg; DOT Standard recommends 1.5-2.0fc Avg.)

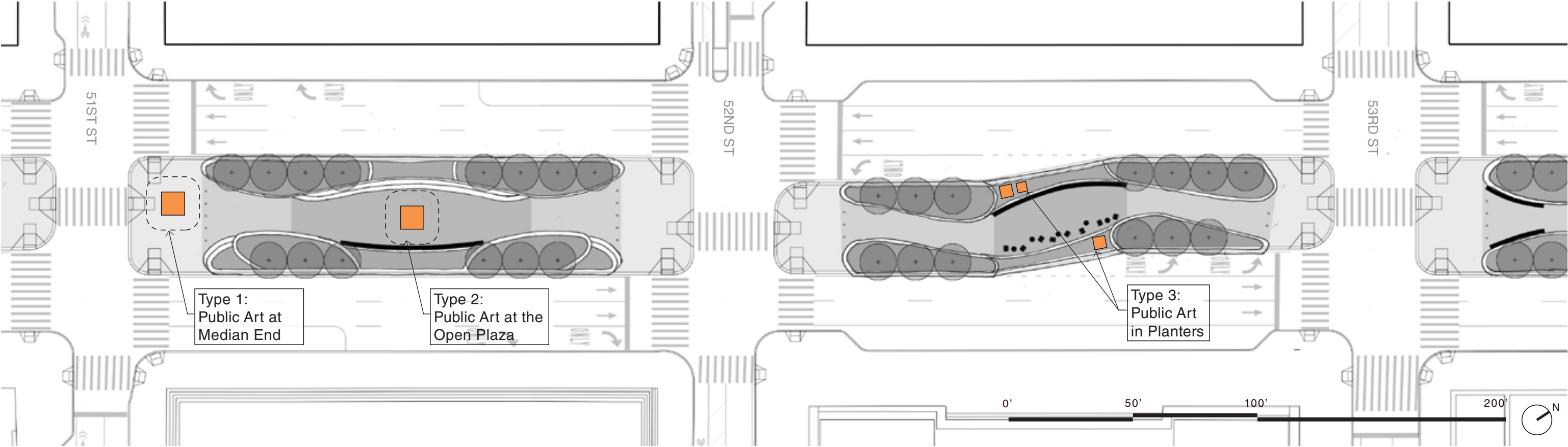
LEGEND

Illuminance less than 1.0 FC



Temporary Public Art | Without Bike Lane

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Building on the robust public art program already incorporated into Park Avenue, locations for temporary public art will be thoughtfully integrated into the design. Public artwork within the medians can serve as gateways, focal points, and landmarks, helping connect the medians to one another and to the adjacent side streets. The artwork foundation base can be located at median tips, within open plazas, or inside planters.



Type 1: Public Art at Median End
Parabolic Light, Fred Eversley



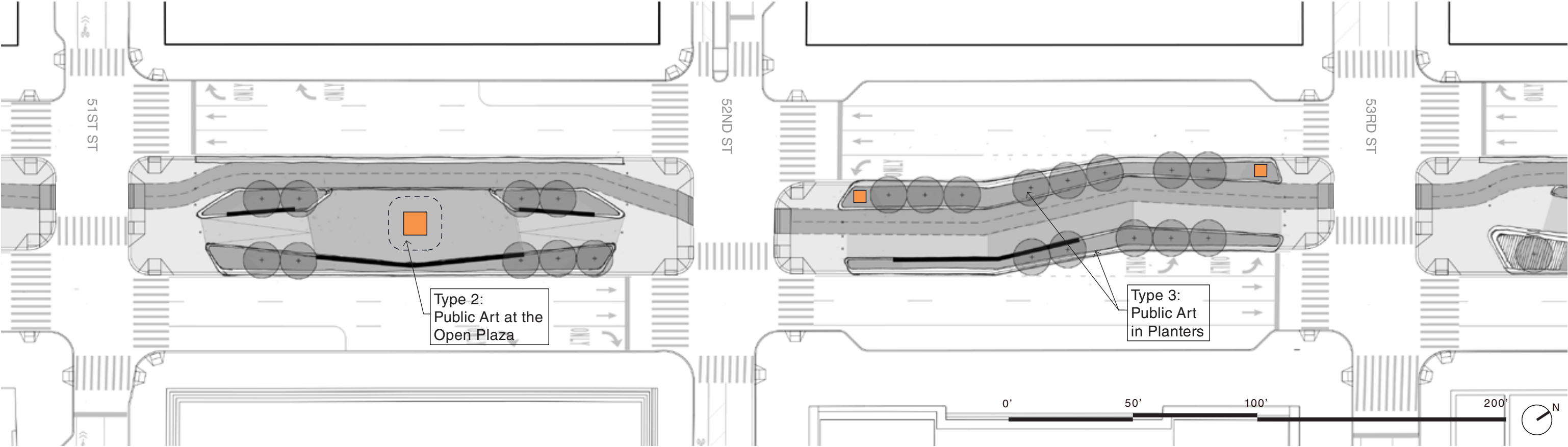
Type 2: Public Art at the Open Plaza
Old Tree, Pamela Rosenkranz



Type 3: Public Art in Planters
Allen Exhibition at Kasmin Gallery

Temporary Public Art | With Bike Lane

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Building on the robust public art program already incorporated into Park Avenue, locations for temporary public art will be thoughtfully integrated into the design. Public artwork within the medians can serve as gateways, focal points, and landmarks, helping connect the medians to one another and to the adjacent side streets. The artwork foundation base can be located at median tips, within open plazas, or inside planters.



Type 2: Public Art at the Open Plaza
Old Tree, Pamela Rosenkranz

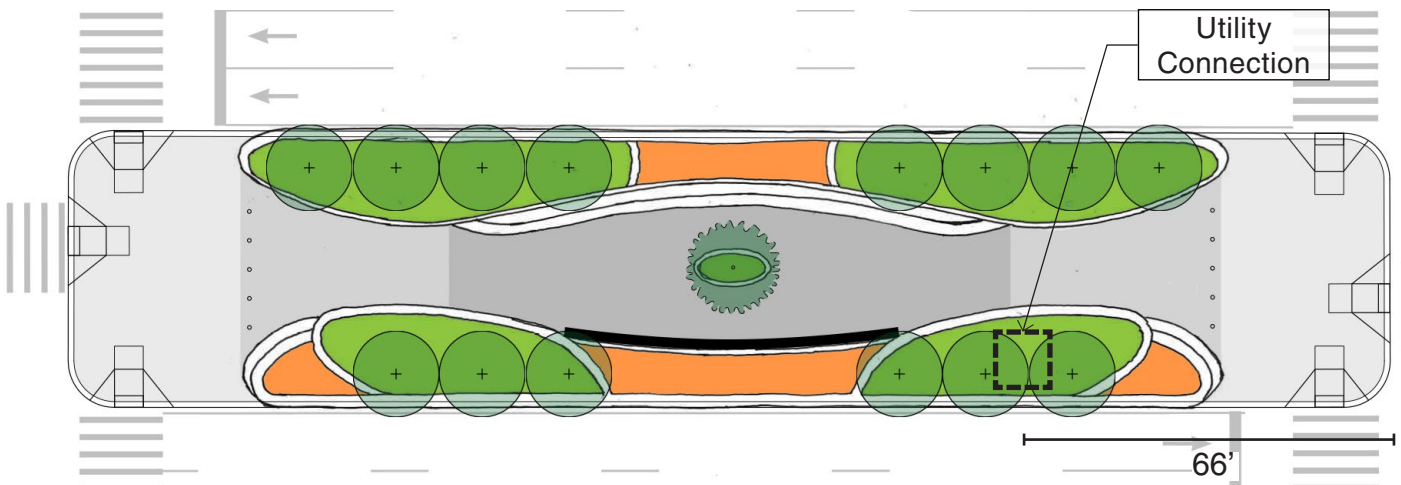


Type 3: Public Art in Planters
Allen Exhibition at Kasmin Gallery

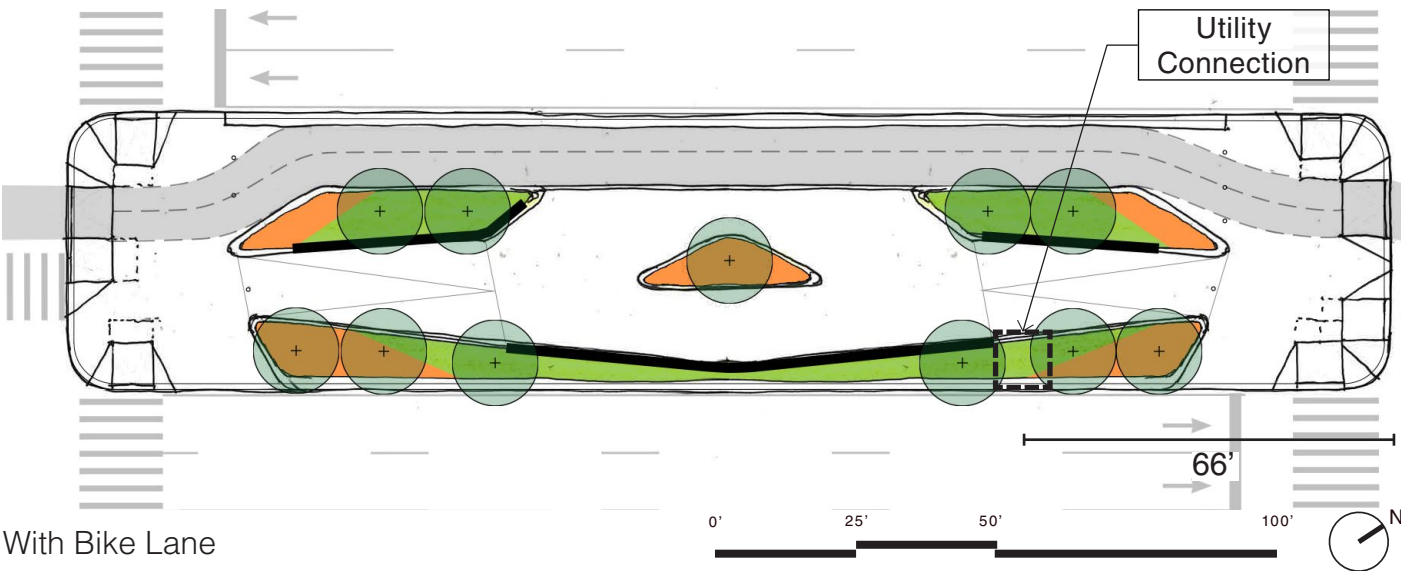
Utilities

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Each median will be provided with a utility connection through the train shed roof. This will provide electrical, water, and data service to each median.



Without Bike Lane



With Bike Lane



WATER

Connection for:

- RPZ
- Water Meter
- Irrigation
- Hose Bibs



ELECTRICAL

Non-metered connection for:

- Pedestrian Lights
- Street Lights
- APS Poles

Metered connection for:

- Accent Lighting
- Event Infrastructure



DATA

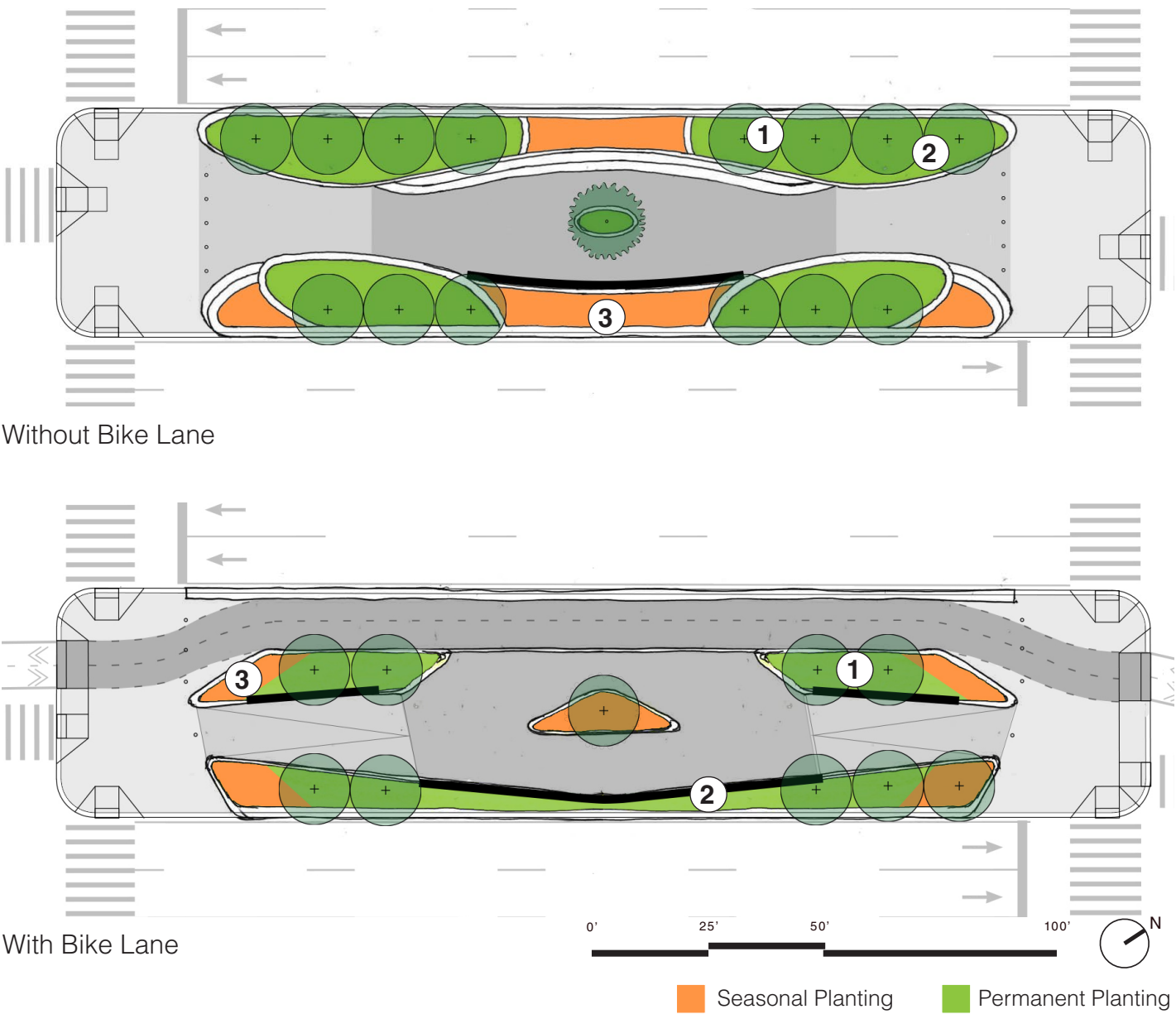
Connection for:

- Event Infrastructure

Planting Strategy

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Planting strategy responds to challenging urban conditions, including pollution, limited light, constrained soil volumes, and wind tunneling. Species selection prioritizes hardy, resilient plantings that perform within these constraints while enhancing ecological diversity and seasonal interest.



TREES



Japanese Zelkova



Ivory Silk Japanese Tree Lilac



Cornelian Cherry

SHRUBS AND GROUNDCOVER



Inkberry Holly



Pennsylvania Sedge



Alum root

SEASONAL PLANTING



Spring: Tulips



Summer: Begonia



Fall: Chrysanthemum

Planting | Tree Palette

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

UPRIGHT



Zelkova serrata
'Mushino'
Zelkova

Ulmus parvifolia
'Everclear'
Lacebark Elm

Carpinus betulus
'Frans Fontaine'
European Hornbeam

Acer campestre
'Streetwise'
Hedge Maple

FLOWERING



Tilia cordata
'Shamrock'
Littleleaf Linden

Syringa reticulata 'Ivory Silk'
Tree Lilac

UNDERSTORY



Crataegus viridis
'Winter King'
Hawthorn

Cornus kousa
Kousa Dogwood

Cornus mas
Cornelian Cherry

Amelanchier laevis
'Cumulus'
Serviceberry

Cercis canadensis var. alba
Eastern Redbud

LEGEND

- Leaf shape
- Fall color
- Flower color

Planting | Fall Color Palette

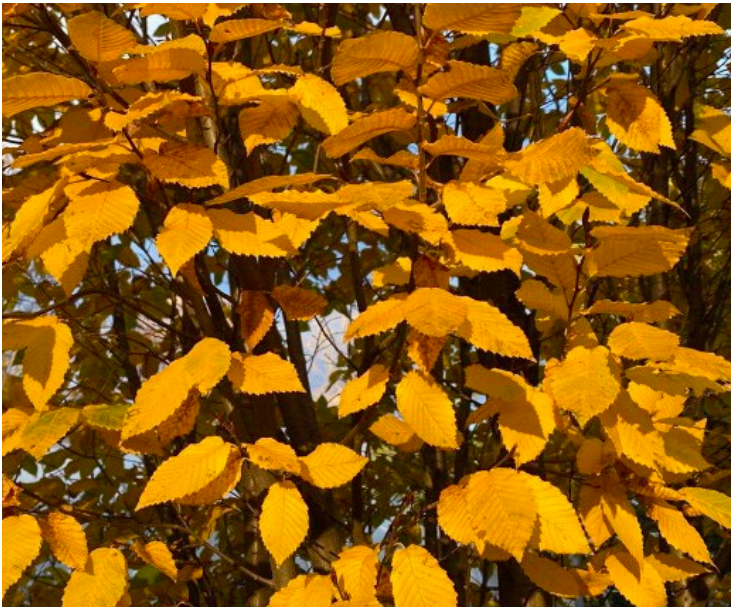
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Upright: Carpinus caroliniana 'Uxbridge'



Upright: Zelkova serrata



Upright: Carpinus betulus



Upright: Ulmus parvifloia



Understory: Cornus x rutgersensis



Understory: Cornus kousa



Understory: Amelanchier



Understory: Cornus mas

Planting | Winter Interest

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Structure: Strong vase-like branching of Zelkova serrata.



Bark: Bright orange, brown and gray exfoliating bark of Ulmus parvifolia.



Persistent Fruit: Persistent fruit of Crataegus 'Winter King' provides both visual interest and while supporting urban wildlife.



Structure: Tight architectural branching of Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'.



Bark: Tan, brown and olive exfoliating bark of Cornus kousa.



Late Winter Flowers: Tight yellow flowers bud in late February and bring brightness to short days.

05

Project Schedule

Tabling Event

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

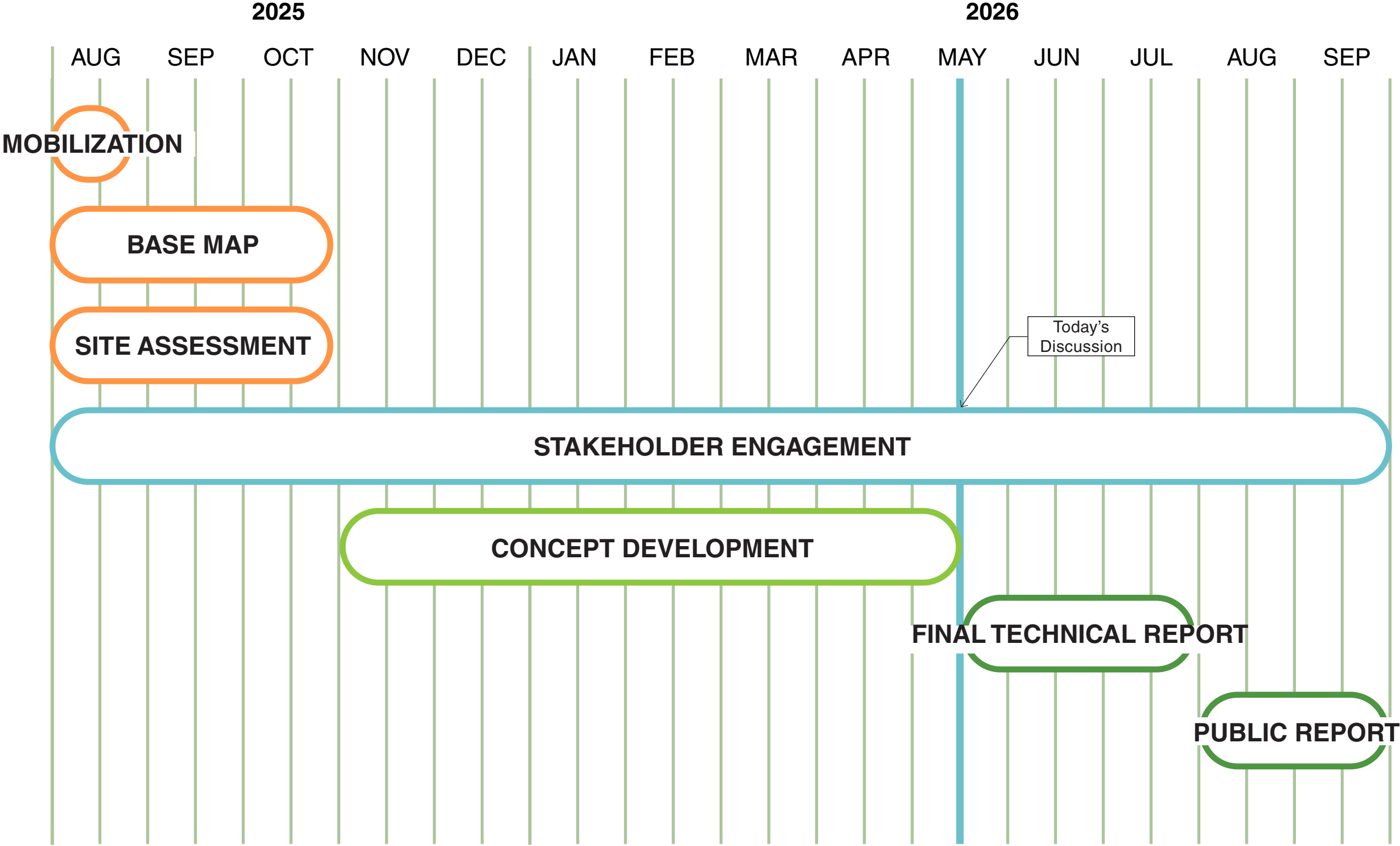
Tabling for the Park Avenue Vision Project served as a way to gather in-person community feedback from pedestrians on site. The project team presented two design concepts, and used interactive tools (including stickers and post it notes) for members of the public to share their input.

- **Weekday vs Weekend Participants:** Weekday participants represented commuters and young professionals, who regularly pass through the site area. Weekend participants represented people visiting the site area for leisure.
- **Bike Infrastructure:** Weekday participants seemed most receptive to bike lanes, while weekend participants raised safety concerns about speeding e-bikes, particularly for older adults.
- **Landscaping and Seating:** Most participants were receptive to increased plantings on the median, and expressed excitement about the opportunity for more seating.



Concept Vision Plan Schedule

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Status of Sector by Sector Roof Replacement

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Source: MTA

The Grand Central Train Shed Roof Replacement is part of the 2025–2029 Capital Plan. In coordination with Midtown rezoning and ongoing development, the MTA is scheduling the roof work to align with adjacent development projects.

Thank you. Questions?

Park Avenue Vision Plan

We want to hear from you!



Scan the QR code or visit
bit.ly/ParkAveSurvey
to take the digital survey.*

* Note: this link is case sensitive

