

STARR WHITEHOUSE
Landscape Architects
and Planners PLLC

Park Avenue Vision Plan

CB5 : Concept Design Update

Landscape Architecture +
Urban Design Services

September 24, 2026

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01

MTA Project Schedule

Status of Sector by Sector Roof Replacement

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Source: MTA

Sector 2 design is generally complete with early stages of construction underway. Sector 3 is following closely behind. Designs for the Park Avenue corridor are due to MTA by the end of calendar year 2026.

East Midtown Governing Group

WHAT WE HEARD

At the East Midtown Public Realm Improvement Fund Governing Group (EMGG), $39 million was unanimously approved to advance the design and construction of the Park Avenue Vision Project.

The funding will support design and construction of Sectors 2 and 3.



02

What We Heard

Community Engagement

WHAT WE HEARD

As of July 2026, the team's community engagement has included the following:

18

Stakeholder Interviews

48 individuals from **17 organizations**

4

Community Board Meetings

Manhattan Community Board 5 & 6

3

Public Tabling Events

5 locations along Park Avenue gathering concept design feedback

2

Public Surveys

~4400 responses

Park Avenue Vision Plan | Concept Design

WHAT WE HEARD



Proposed Design without Bike Lane



Proposed Design with Bike Lane

Community Board 5 Resolution

WHAT WE HEARD

Manhattan Community Board Five supports the Park Avenue Vision Plan Concept Design without a bike lane which maximizes pedestrian space by reallocating excess roadway space to wider, safer, greener, more accessible, and more usable medians, with the following longer term goals:

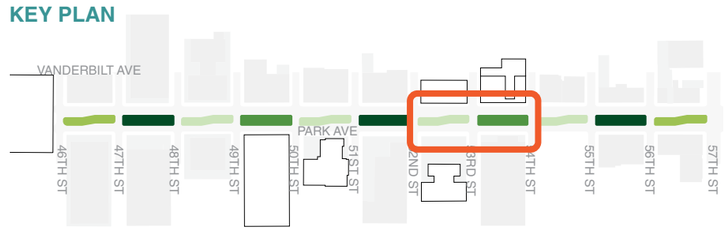
- Closing cross-streets to connect some or all of the medians to create a seamless “park”
- Removing at least one additional* vehicle (parking or travel) lane and use that space to provide fully separated bike lanes either adjacent to the curbs or the medians, while ensuring physical separation from pedestrians
- Providing access to at least one bathroom, either in the medians themselves or by partnering with nearby businesses or building owners
- Supporting concessions, the scale of which should be subject to the availability of public restrooms, to encourage park users to linger instead of just pass through; and be it further
- CB5 supports a bike lane on 5th Avenue from Marcus Garvey Park to Washington Square Park, starting with the implementation of a bike-lane in the Future of Fifth Plan.

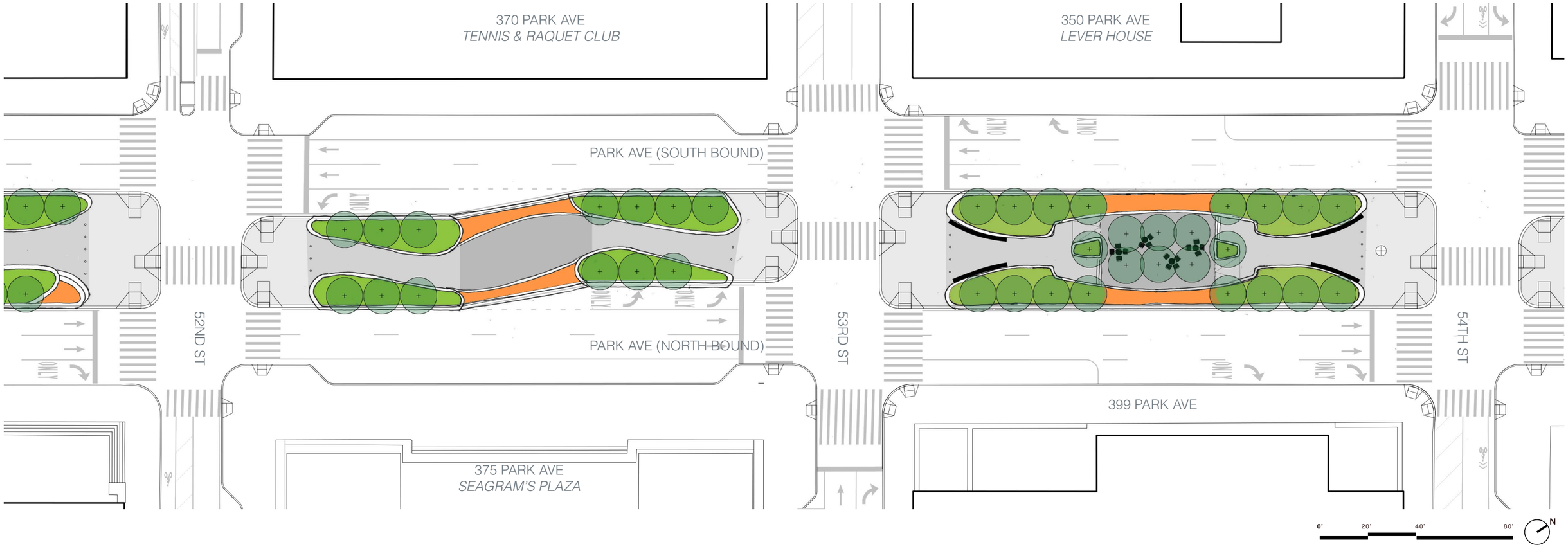


Concept Design without Bike Lane

INITIAL CONCEPTS

KEY PLAN

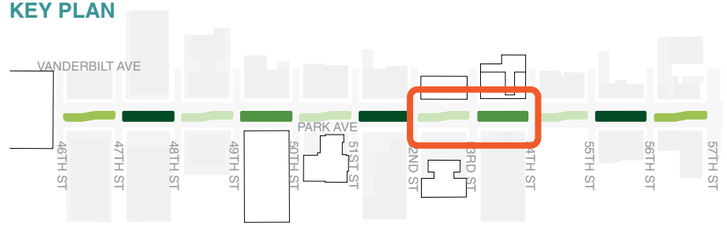




Concept Design with Bike Lane

PROPOSED CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN



370 PARK AVE
TENNIS & RAQUET CLUB

350 PARK AVE
LEVER HOUSE

PARK AVE (SOUTH BOUND)

N/S BIKE LANE

PARK AVE (NORTH BOUND)

52ND ST

53RD ST

54TH ST

375 PARK AVE
SEAGRAM'S PLAZA

399 PARK AVE

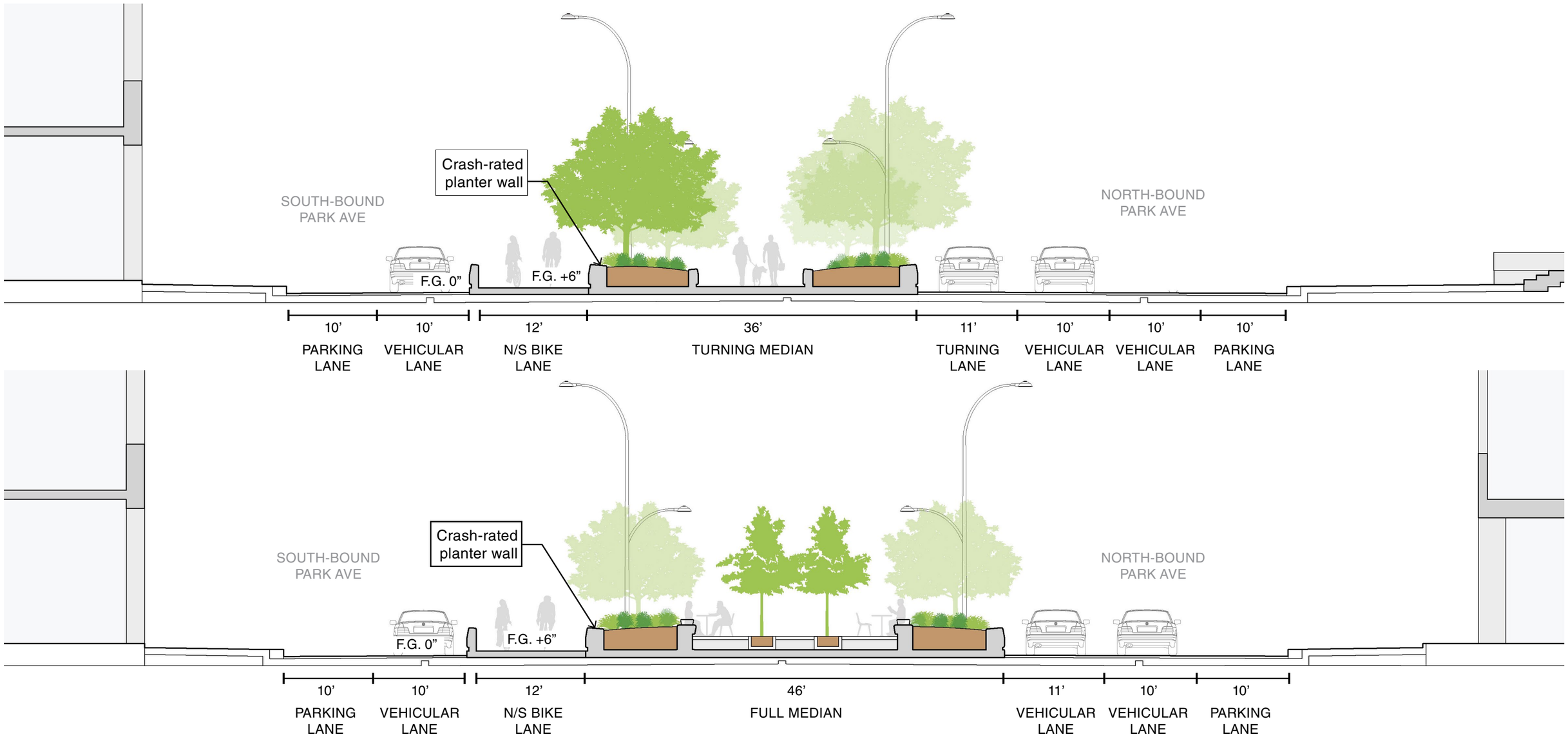
0' 20' 40' 80' N

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Typical Median Section

PROPOSED CONCEPT DESIGN

KEY PLAN



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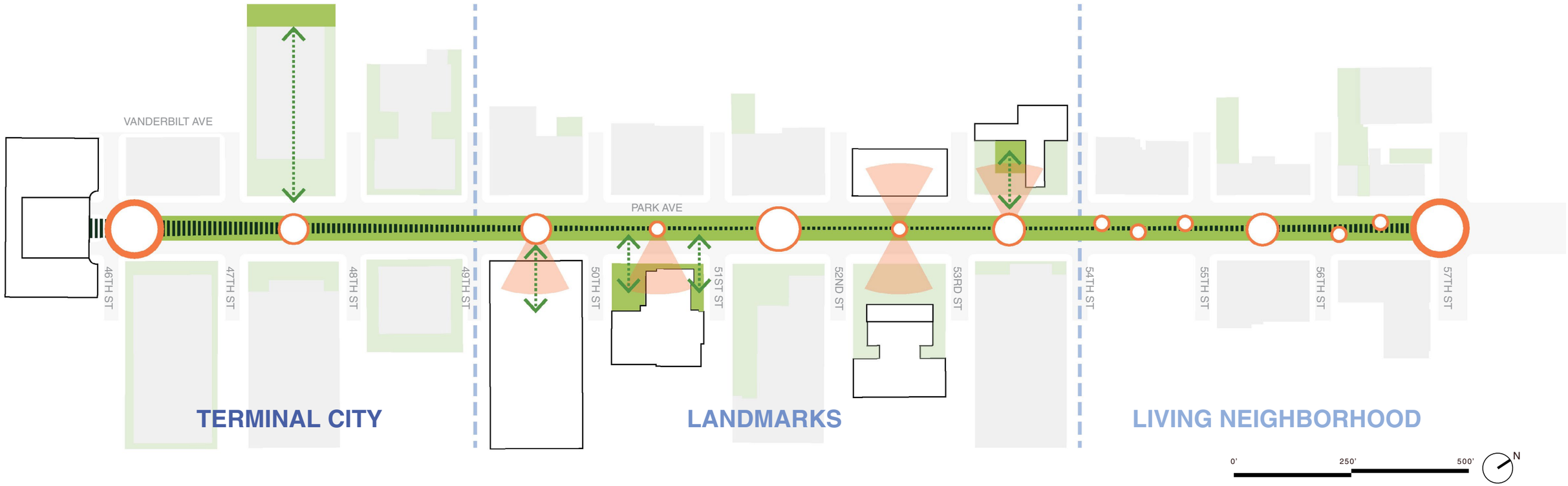
0 4' 8' 16'

03

Concept Design

Corridor Framework

DESIGN FRAMEWORK



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

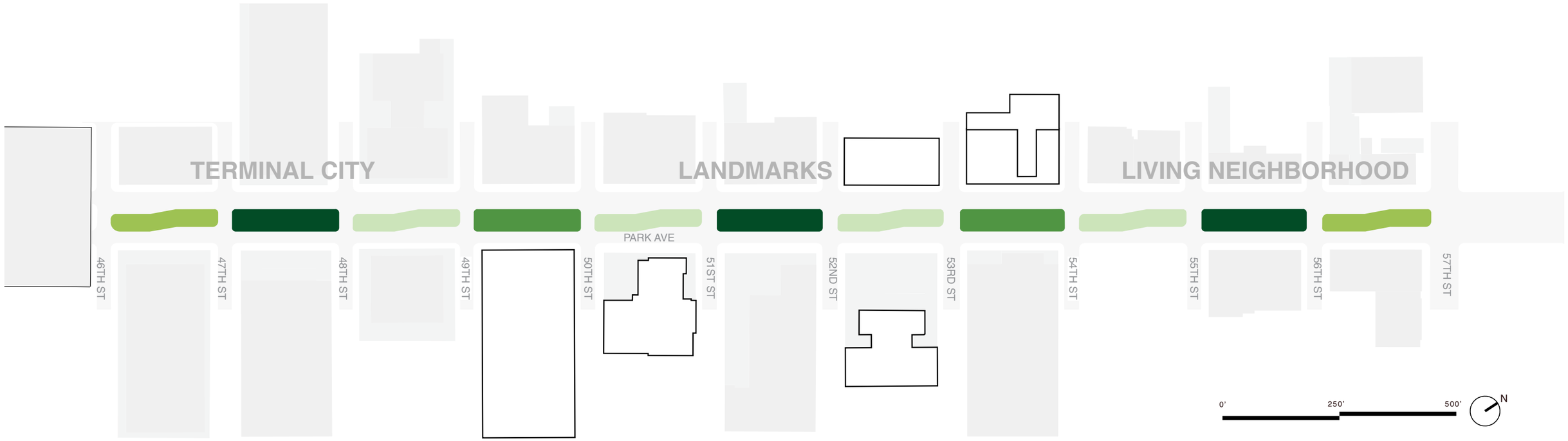
Terminal City: Accommodates the highest levels of pedestrian activity from Grand Central Terminal with wider pathways and open gathering spaces that support movement, seating, and social activity.
Landmarks: Frames and focuses views toward the corridor's landmark architecture while creating intentional spaces for gathering, celebration, and special events.
Living Neighborhood: Introduces a more intimate landscape character through denser planting and integrated art, reflecting the transition from the gallery district to the residential neighborhood to the north.

LEGEND

- Existing Plazas and Gardens
- Median Corridor
- Design Features
- Connections
- Viewsheds
- 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 Garden Medians establish intentional spaces for celebration, gathering and respite, highlighting defining features that reinforce the corridor's identity.

Bosque Medians frames views to adjacent landmarks while creating a shaded, welcoming setting for seating and social gathering.

LEGEND

- Entry Medians
- Formal Garden Medians
- Bosque Medians
- Turning Lane Medians

Typology 01: Entry Median | Plan

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

KEY PLAN



PARKING LANE

VEHICULAR LANE

TURNING LANE

N/S BIKE LANE

54’

91’

36’

83’

40’

108’

231’

Temporary art

Bench seating

Utility connection

Ada companion seating

Crash-rated planter wall

Light pole

Bollards

LEGEND

Permanent Planting

Seasonal Planting

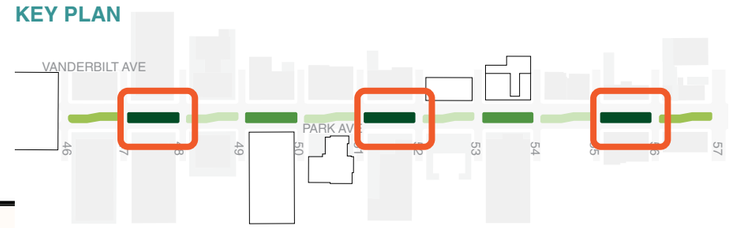
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Typology 02: Formal Garden Median | Plan

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

KEY PLAN



RIGHT TURN LANE

PARKING

VEHICULAR LANE

N/S BIKE LANE

46’

231’

Trash receptacle

Crash-rated planter wall

Bench seating

Ada companion seating

Utility connection

Bollards

Temporary art

Light pole

LEGEND

Permanent Planting

Seasonal Planting

0’ 10’ 20’ 40’ N

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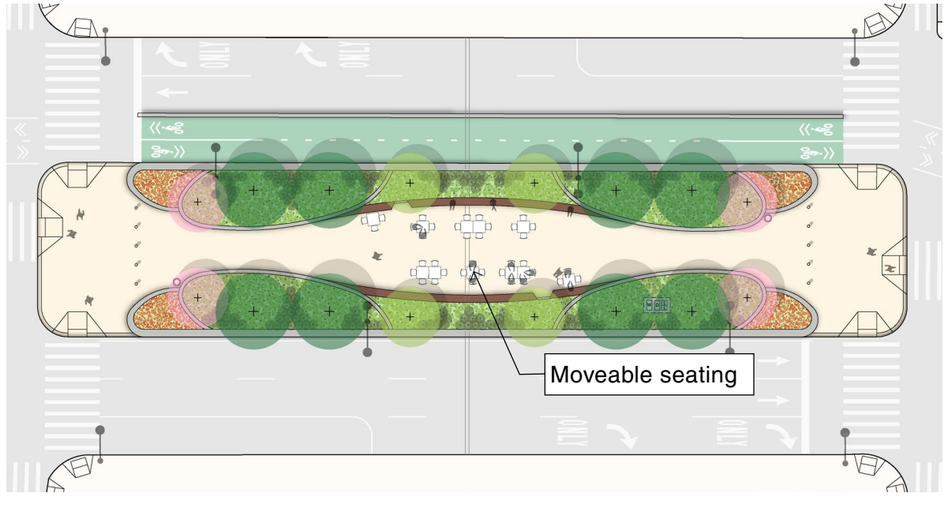
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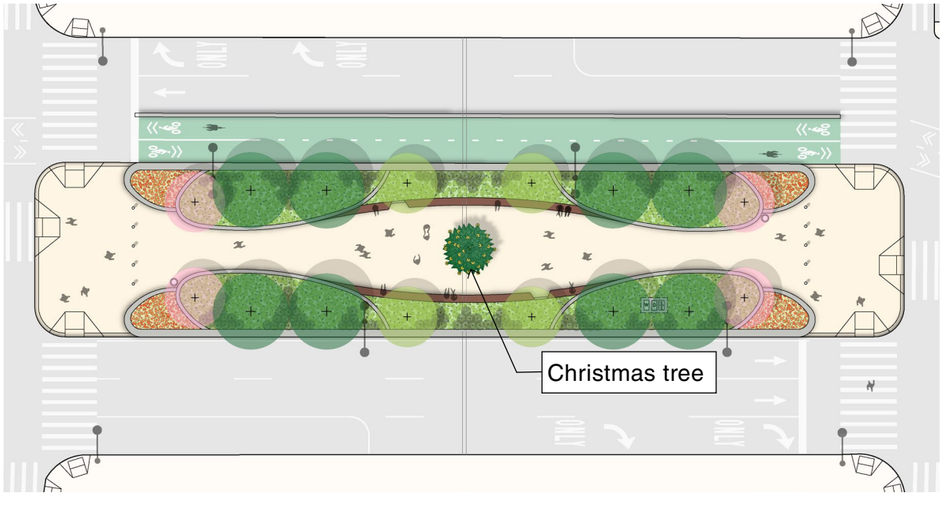
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Typology 02: Formal Garden Median | Program Opportunities

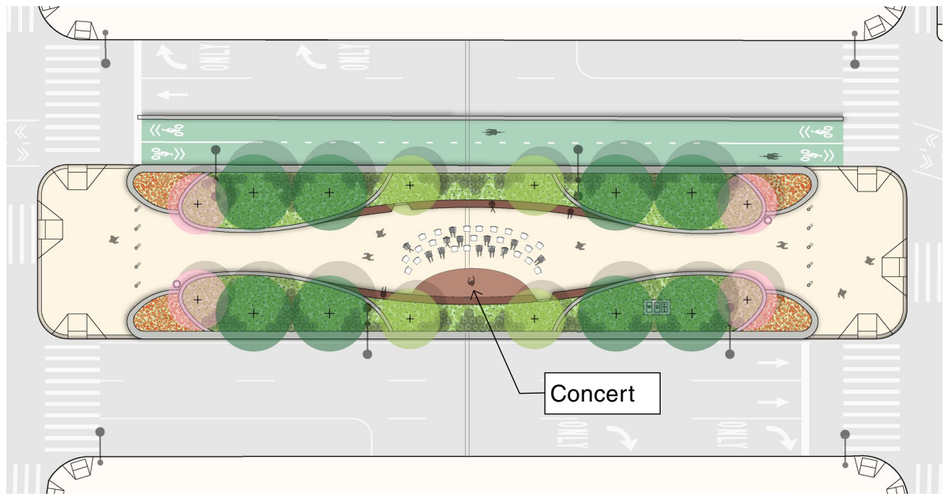
DESIGN FRAMEWORK



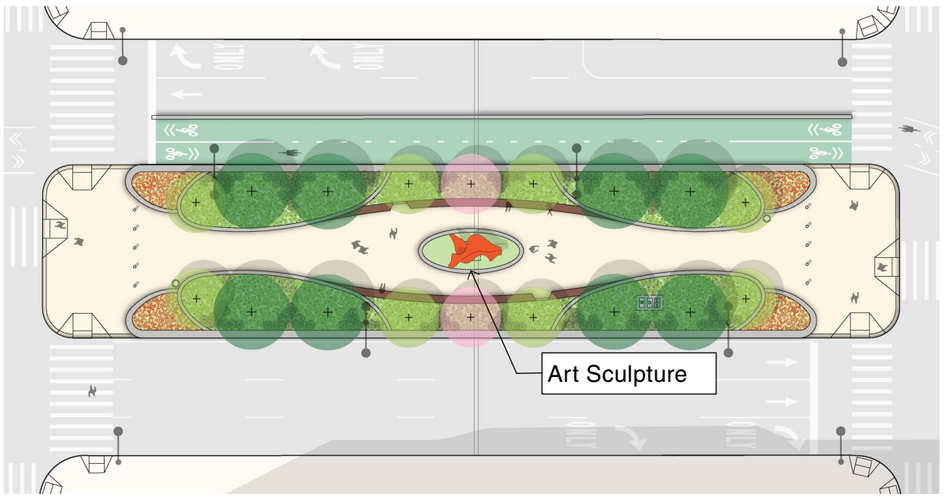
Option 01: Social Gathering Space



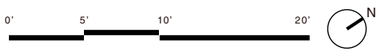
Option 02: Seasonal Interest



Option 03: Event Space



Option 04: Art and Culture

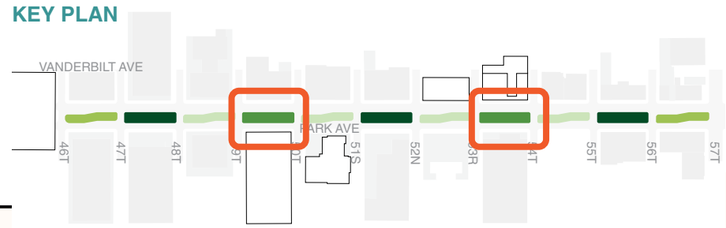


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Typology 03: Bosque Median | Plan

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

KEY PLAN



RIGHT TURN LANE

PARKING

VEHICULAR LANE

N/S BIKE LANE

46’

231’

Up

Up

Trash receptacle

Crash-rated planter wall

Movable seating

Bench seating w/ ada companion seating

Temporary art

Utility connection

Bollards

Bosque tree planting

Drinking fountain

Light pole

LEGEND

Permanent Planting

Seasonal Planting

0’ 10’ 20’ 40’

N

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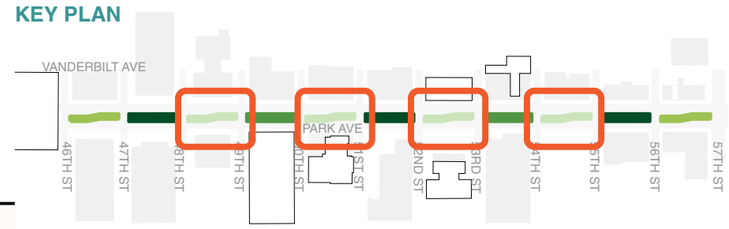
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Typology 04: Turning Lane Median | Plan

DESIGN FRAMEWORK

KEY PLAN



PARKING LANE

VEHICULAR LANE

TURNING LANE

ONLY

N/S BIKE LANE

36’

88’

53’

91’

231’

Trash receptacle

Utility connection

Bench seating

Ada companion seating

Crash-rated planter wall

Bollards

Temporary art

Light pole

LEGEND

Permanent Planting

Seasonal Planting

0’ 10’ 20’ 40’ N

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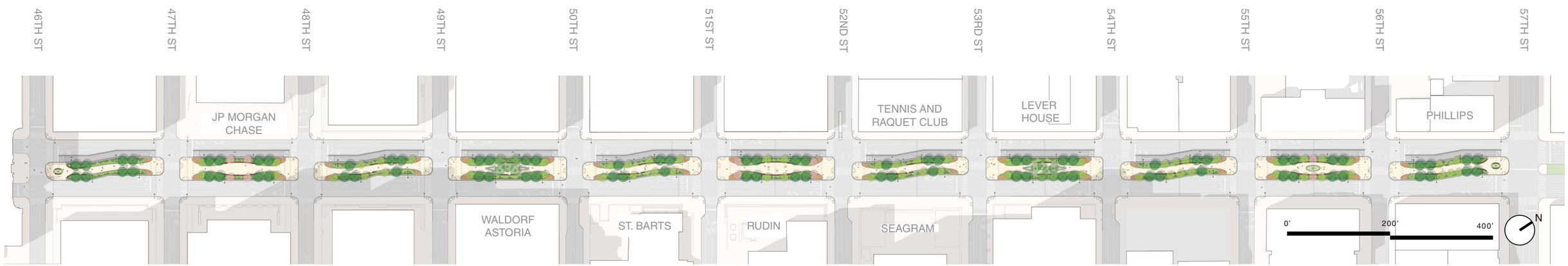
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Corridor Design

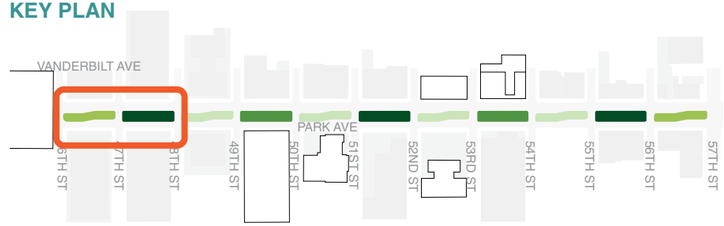
DESIGN FRAMEWORK

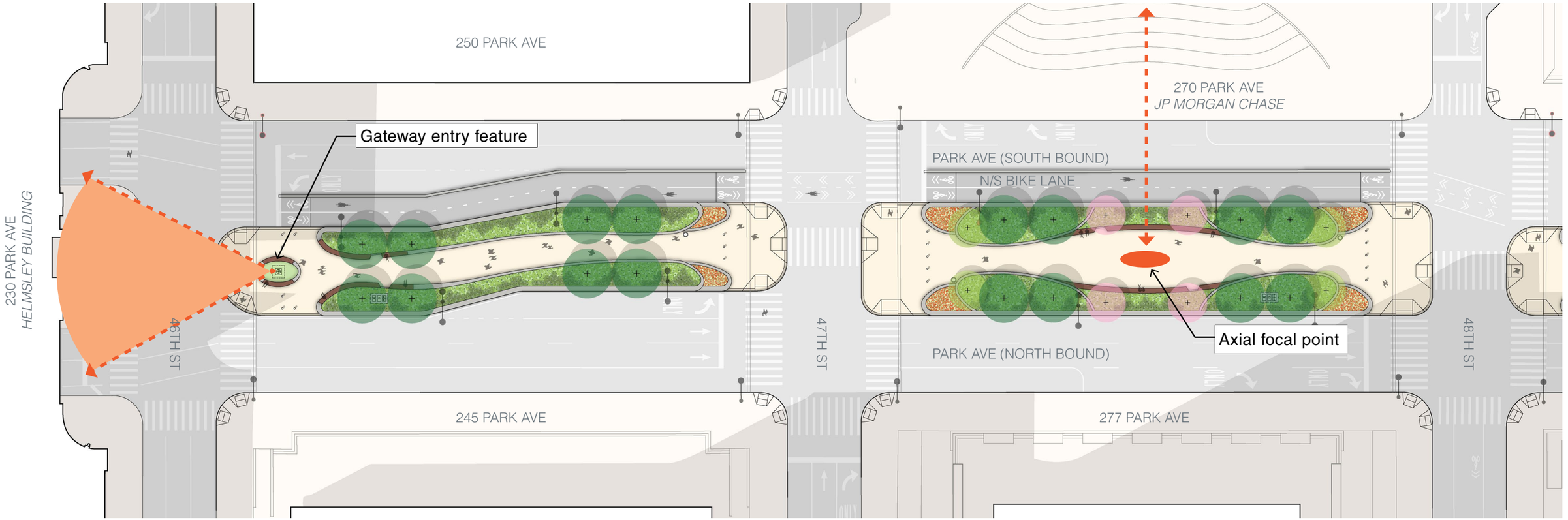


Proposed Median Design | 46th to 48th St

CONCEPT PLAN

KEY PLAN





Typology 01: Entry Median

Serving as a gateway from Grand Central, this median welcomes visitors with an ornamental planter, seating, and an open central area for pedestrian movement.

Typology 02: Formal Garden Median

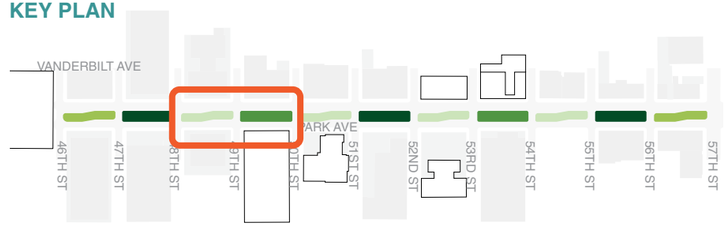
This median responds the soft elegant plaza of the JP Morgan Chase building with space for a major sculpture along the central axis.

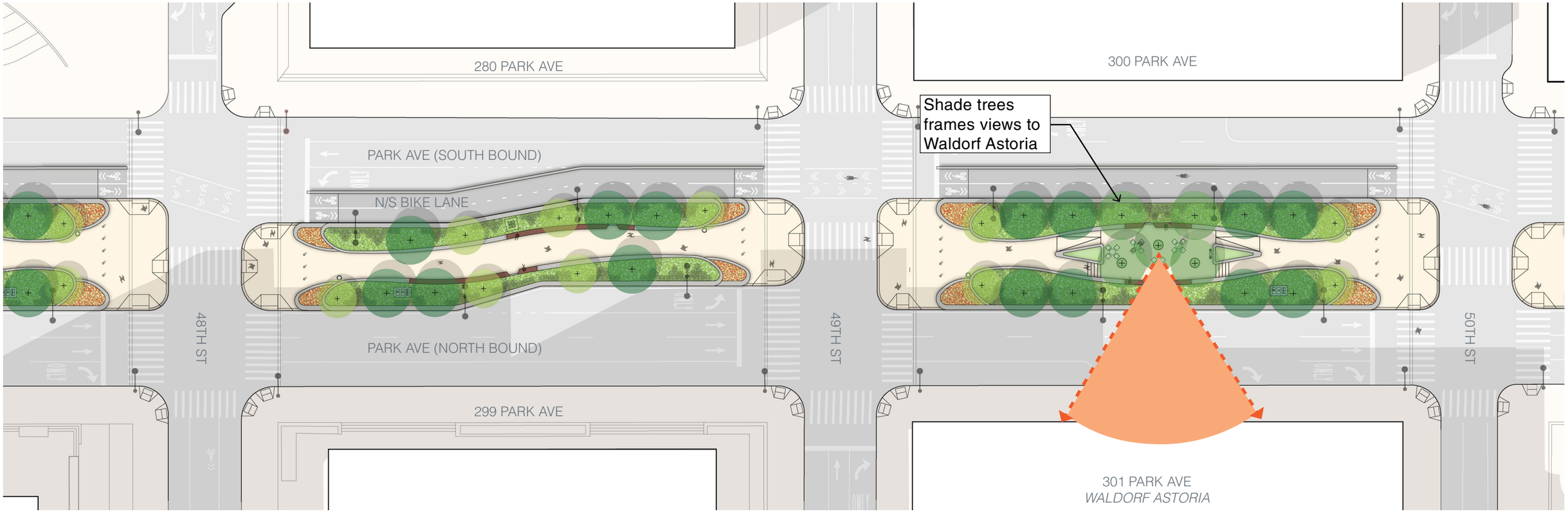
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Proposed Median Design | 48th to 50th St

CONCEPT PLAN

KEY PLAN





Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

A diverse mix of planting creates opportunities to stroll and sit within the median.

Typology 03: Bosque Median

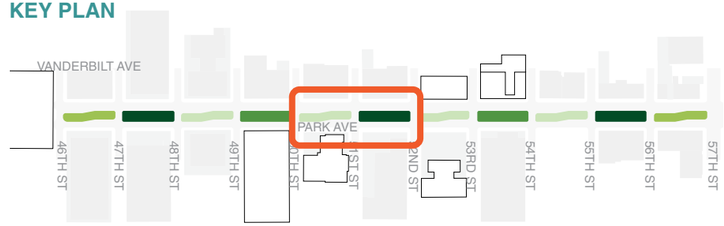
Complementing the Waldorf Astoria, an elevated outdoor terrace under a bosque of trees creates a distinctive garden setting.

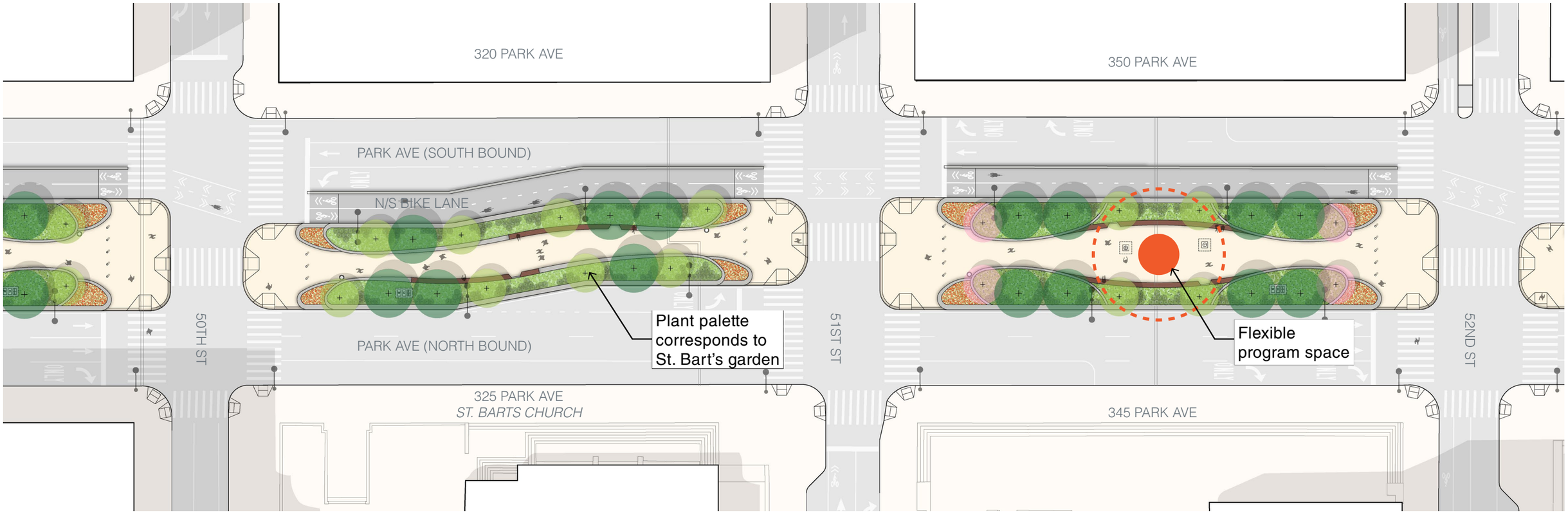
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Proposed Median Design | 50th to 52nd St

CONCEPT PLAN

KEY PLAN





Typology 03: Turning Lane Median

Woodland planting inspired by St. Bart's garden creates opportunities to stroll and sit within the median.

Typology 02: Formal Garden Median

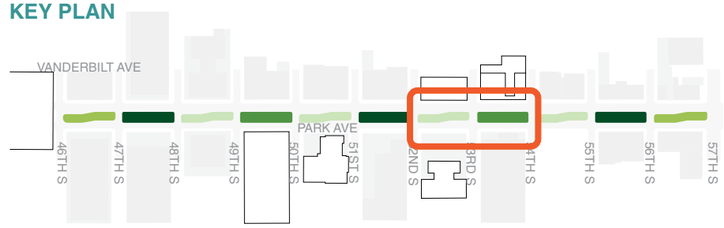
Designed as a flexible event and social space, the median accommodates seasonal gatherings, sculpture, movable seating, and temporary installations.

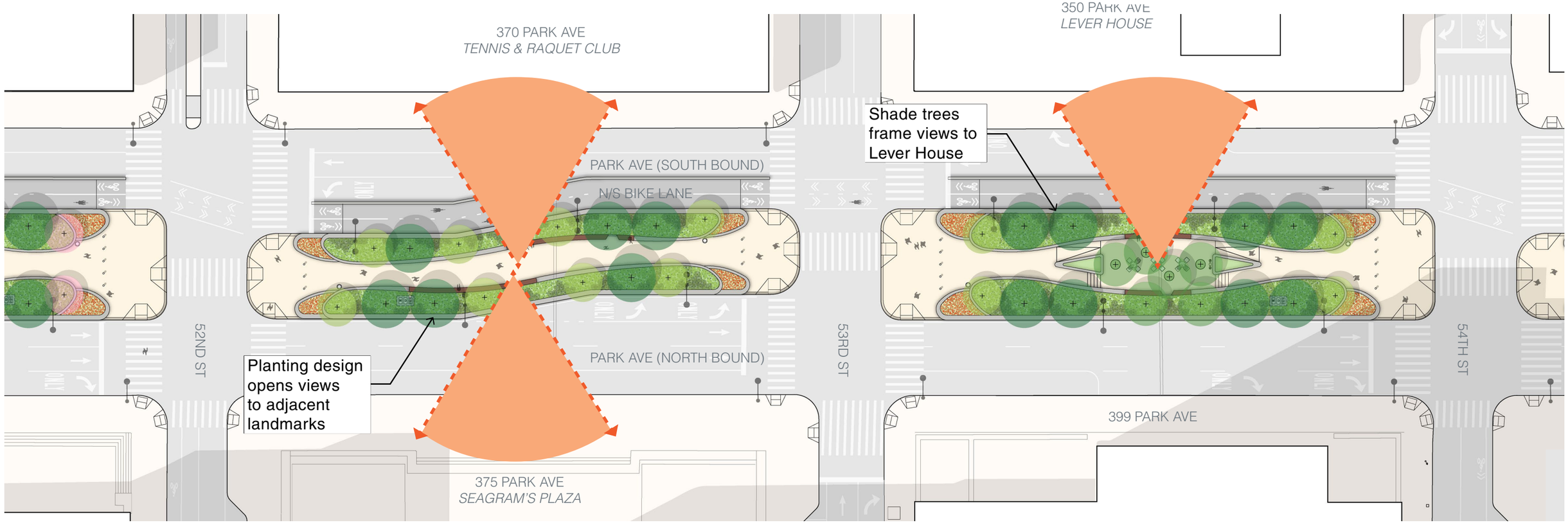
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Proposed Median Design | 52nd to 54th St

CONCEPT PLAN

KEY PLAN





Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

The planting design frames views toward the Seagram Building and the historic Tennis and Racquet Club along this connector median.

Typology 03: Bosque Median

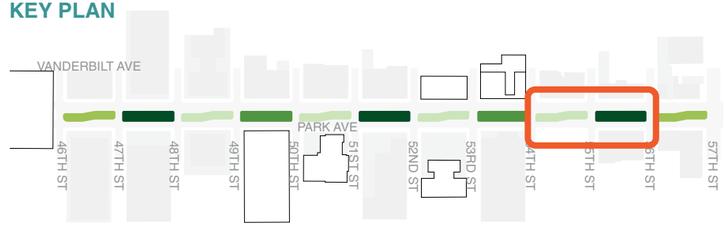
Inspired by the birch trees of Lever House's plaza, an elevated bosque anchors the median alongside sculpture and seasonal plantings.

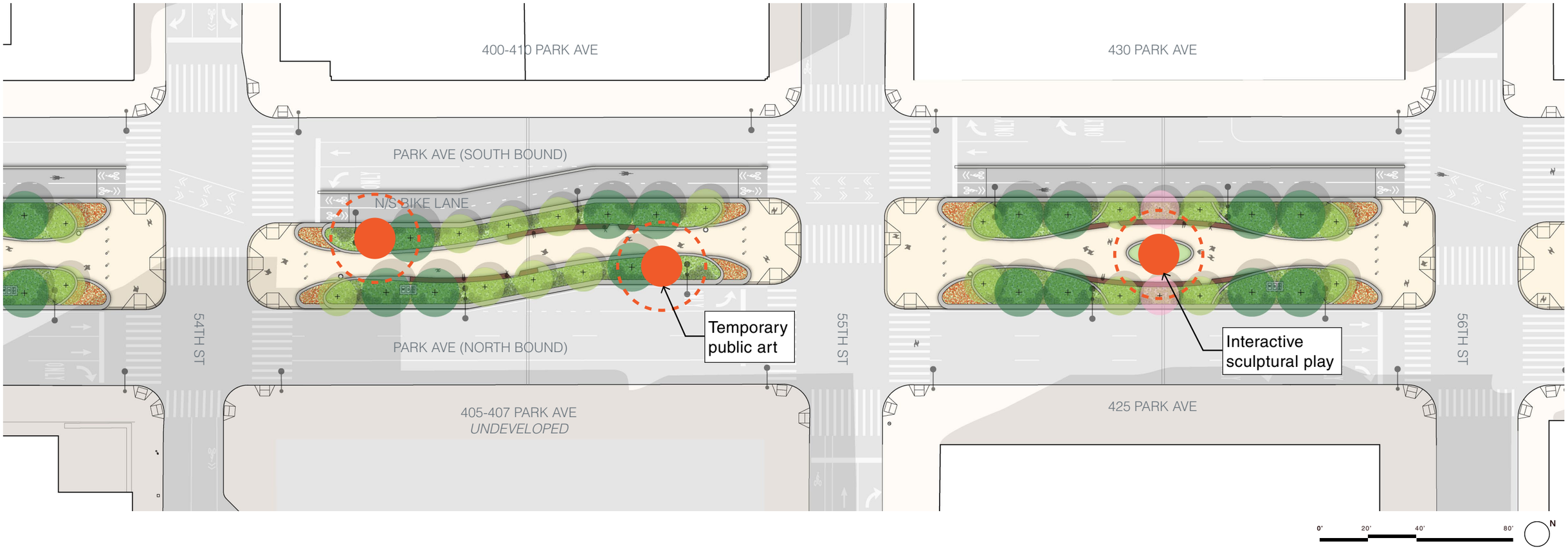
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Proposed Median Design | 54th to 56th St

CONCEPT PLAN

KEY PLAN





Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

Marking the transition to the residential zone and adjacent art galleries, this median combines sculptural displays with dense canopy.

Typology 02: Formal Garden Median

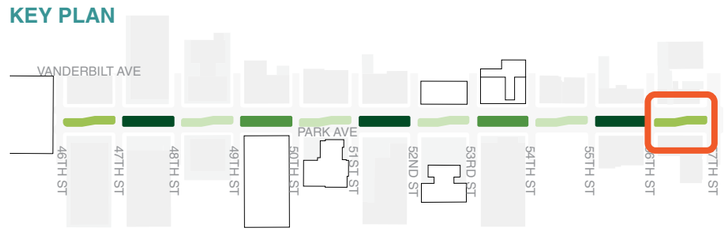
Large and small scale sculptures are integrated within a richly planted landscape, with opportunities for interactive play elements.

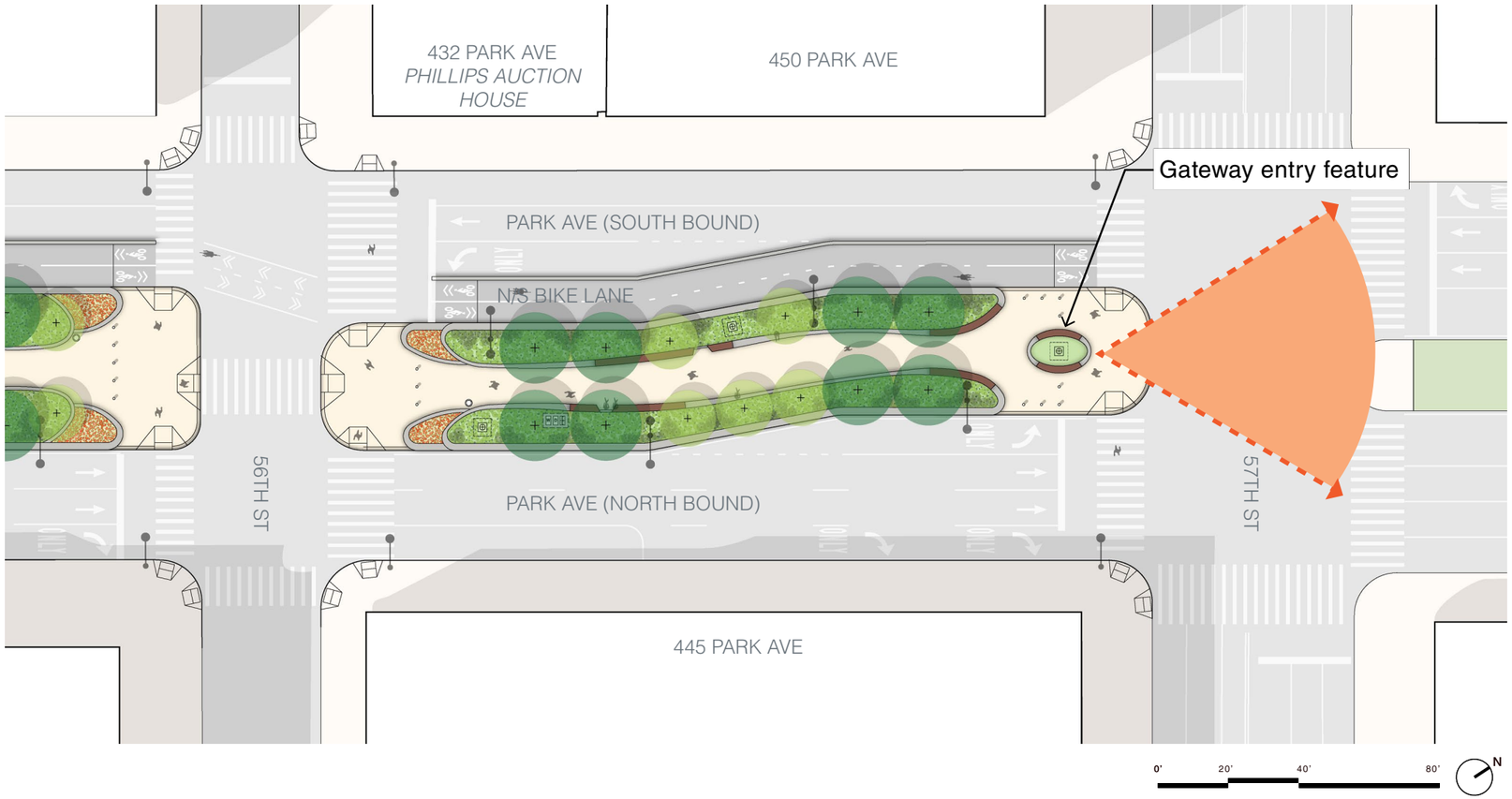
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Proposed Median Design | 56th to 57th St

CONCEPT PLAN

KEY PLAN





Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

As the final block of the corridor, this median greets visitors entering from the north with a generous planter, abundant plantings, and sculpture while serving as a gateway to the corridor and connecting to future occupiable medians to the north.

Entry Median at 46th St

TERMINAL CITY



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Entry Median at 46th St

TERMINAL CITY | WITH TEMPORARY ART



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Bosque Median at 50th St

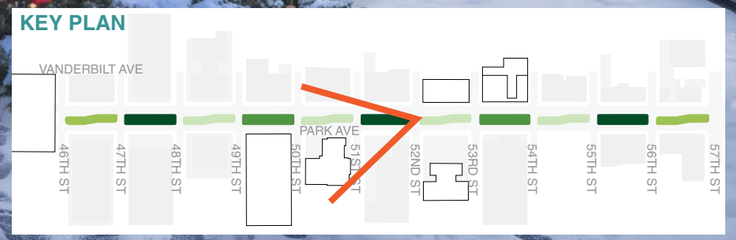
LANDMARKS



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Formal Garden Median at 52nd St

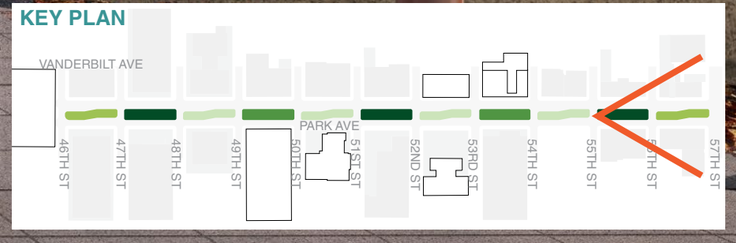
LANDMARKS | WITH SEASONAL DISPLAY



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Garden Median at 55th St

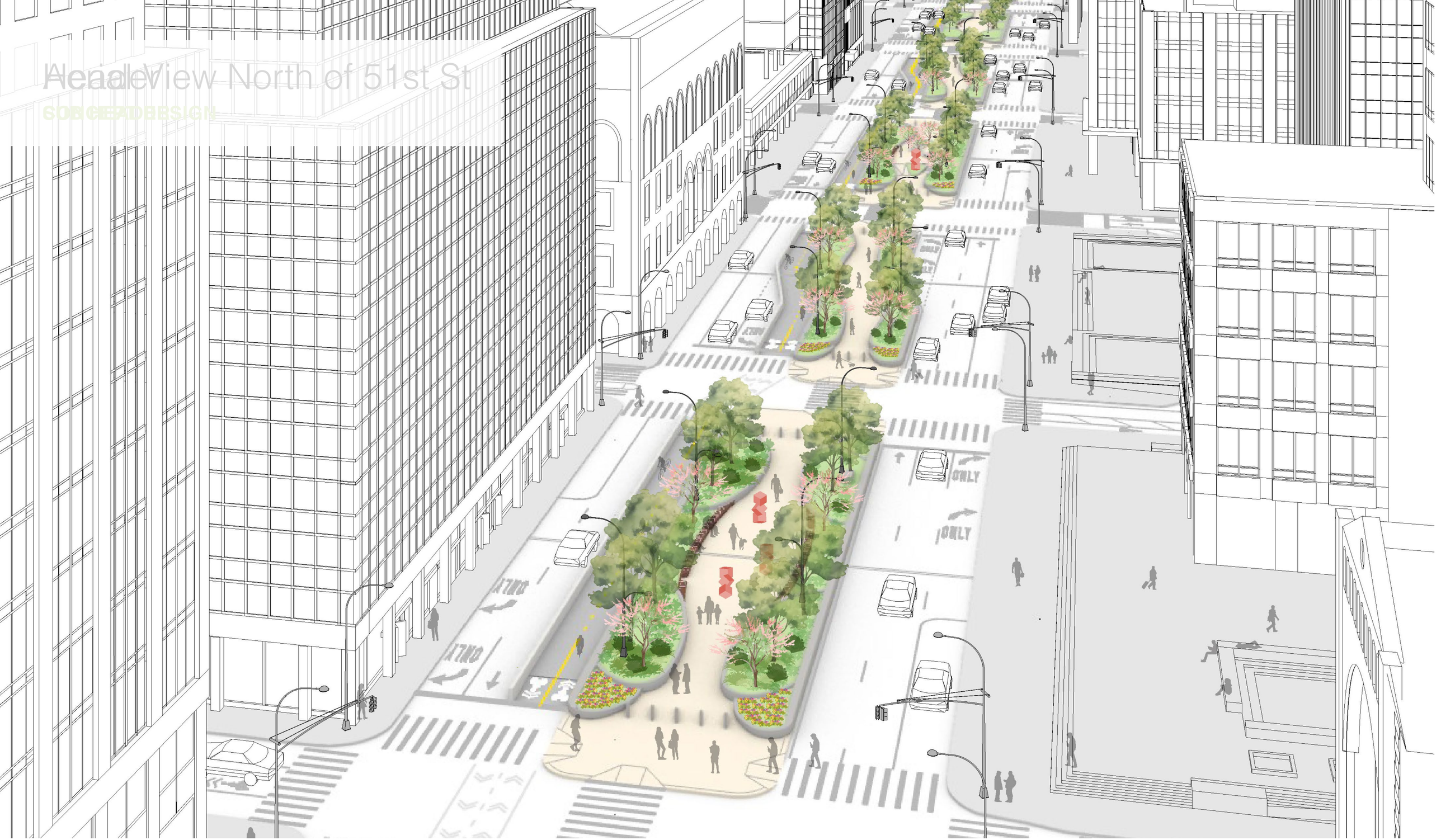
LIVING NEIGHBORHOOD | WITH TEMPORARY ART



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Aerial View North of 51st St

SOB CEAD DEARBHÚ



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Aerial View South of 51st St

CONCEPT DESIGN

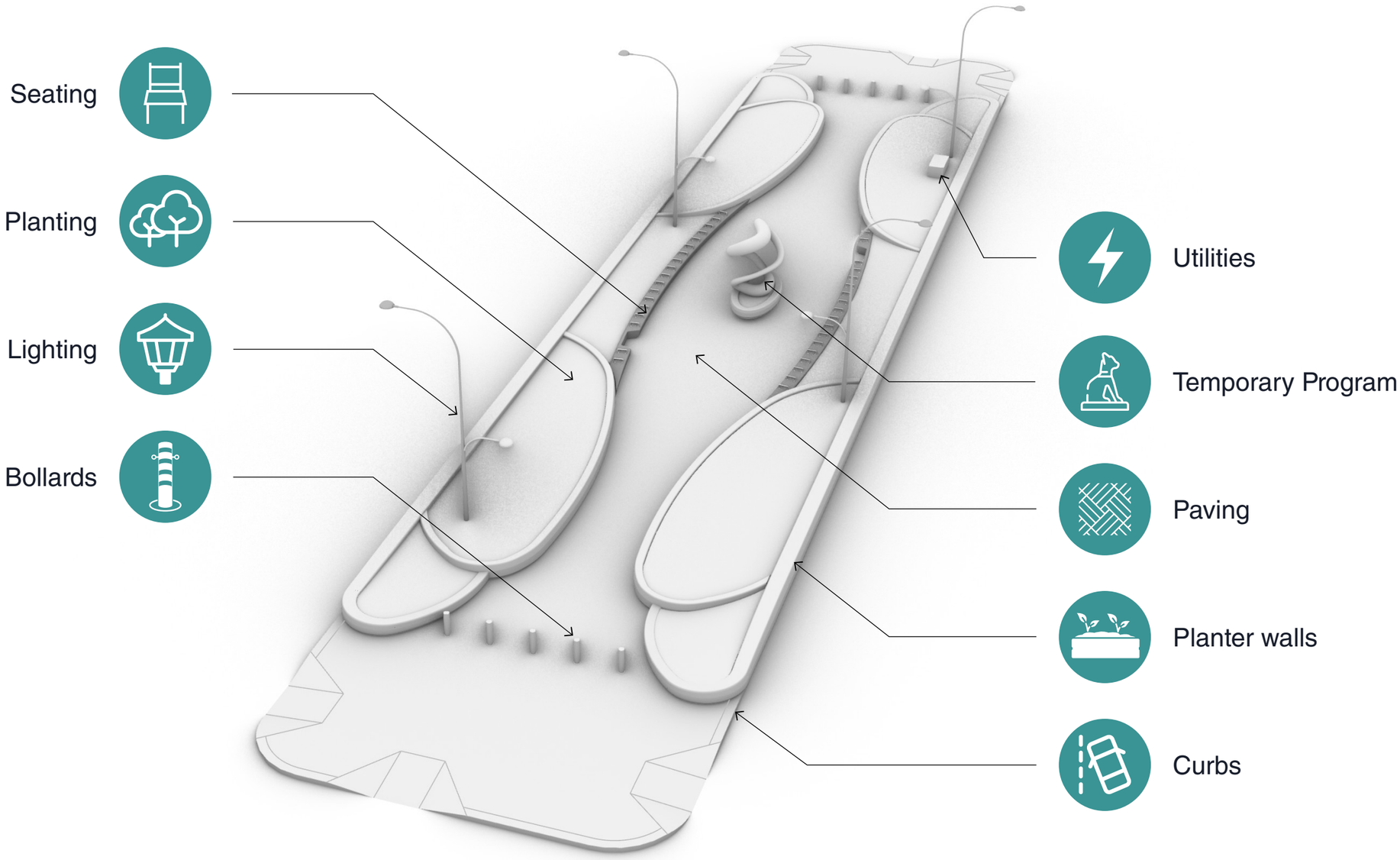
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04

Material Toolkit

Kit of Parts

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Utilities

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Through coordination with the MTA, 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. The utilities will be installed on a concrete pad within utility enclosures. The enclosures will be concealed by planting.

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

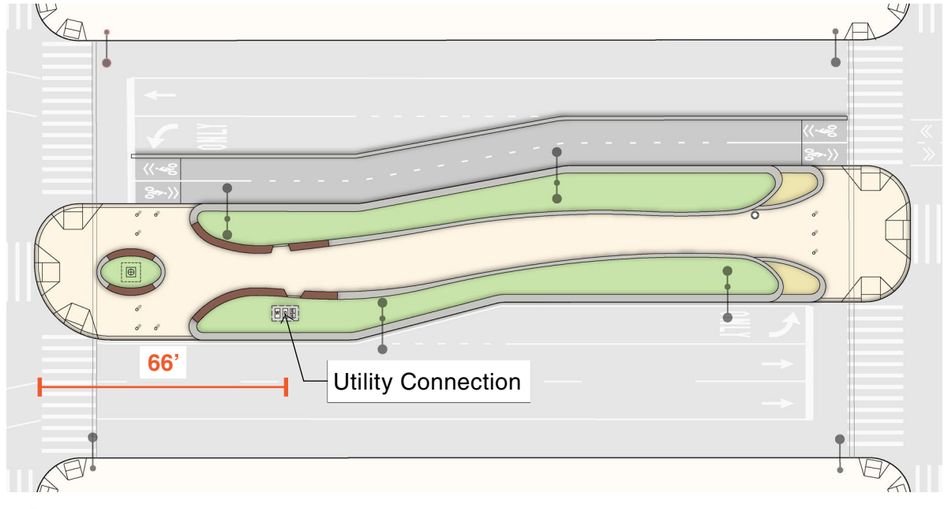
DATA

Connection for:

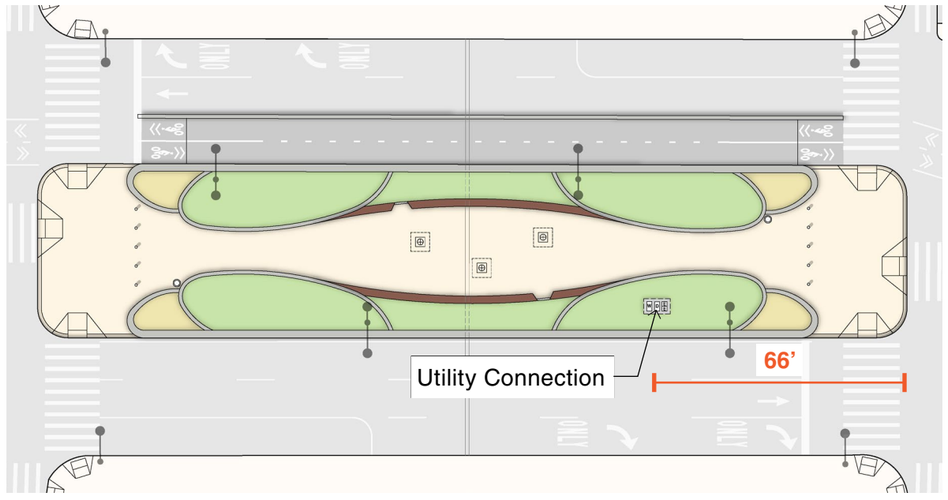
- Event Infrastructure

Utilities

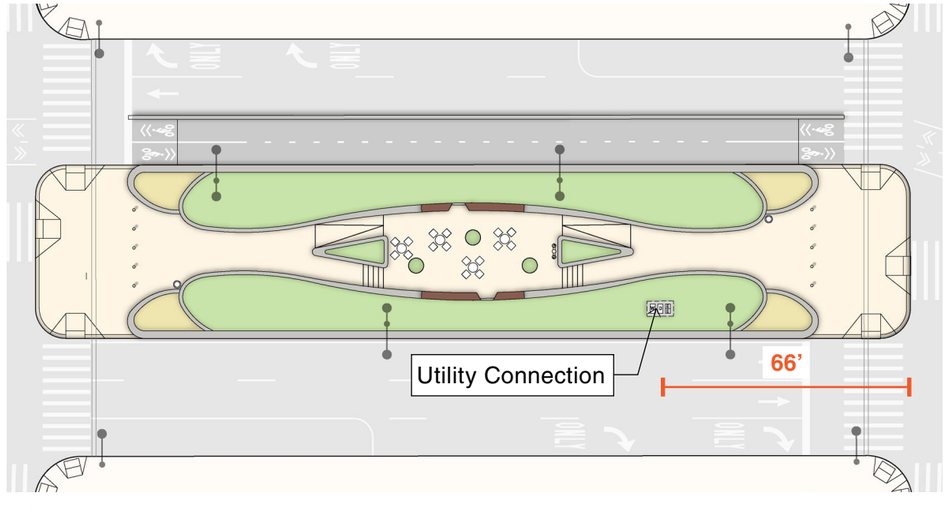
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



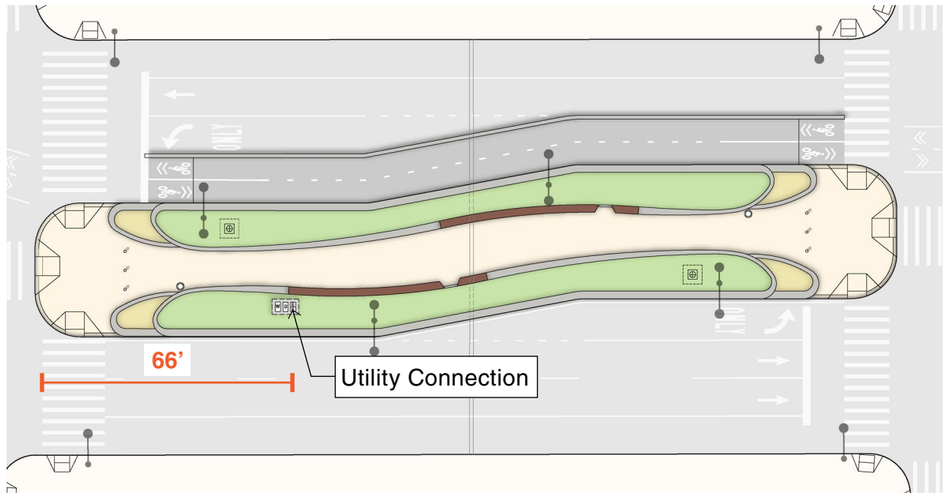
1 Typology 01: Entry Median



2 Typology 03: Formal Garden Median



3 Typology 02: Bosque Median



Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

0’ 5’ 10’ 20’ N

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Hardscape Materials

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

The material selection establishes a cohesive palette for the medians. The team is in the process of vetting the materials presented for durability, constructability, aesthetics and replacement and maintenance considerations.

Standard paving materials such as cast-in-place concrete will be maintained by DOT. Distinctive paving materials such as precast concrete pavers and granite pavers will be maintained by BIDs. DOT and the design team are continuing discussions with the BIDs regarding pavement materials and their maintenance requirements.

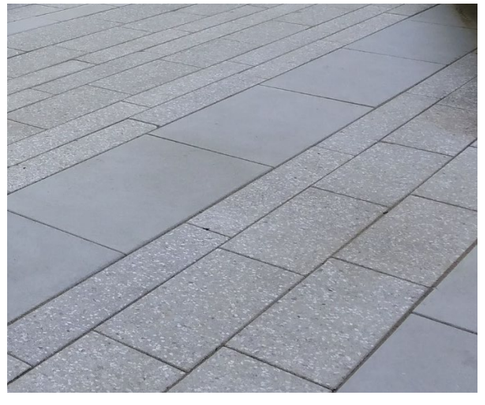
Planter walls will be maintained by DOT. Wall materiality alternatives are granite or precast concrete.

Paving



Cast-in-place concrete

(Greenpoint Landing, Brooklyn)



Precast concrete pavers

(NYU Langone Health Courtyard, NY)



Granite pavers

(JP Morgan Chase, 270 Park Avenue)

Planter Wall



Granite planter walls

JP Morgan Chase, 270 Park Ave



Precast concrete seating wall

Cornell Tech Campus, NY

Paving

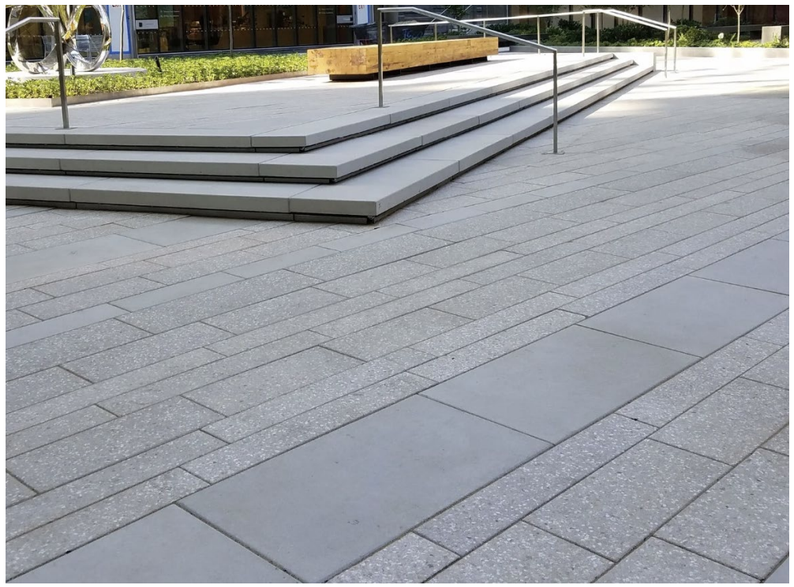
MATERIAL TOOLKIT

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. Various materials are being explored including cast-in-place concrete pavement, precast concrete pavers, and granite pavers. Material selection is dependent on the requirements and capabilities of the entity responsible for the long-term maintenance of the Park Avenue medians.



Cast-in-Place Concrete Pavement w/ scoring pattern

(Greenpoint Landing, Brooklyn)



Precast concrete pavers

(NYU Langone Health Courtyard, NY)

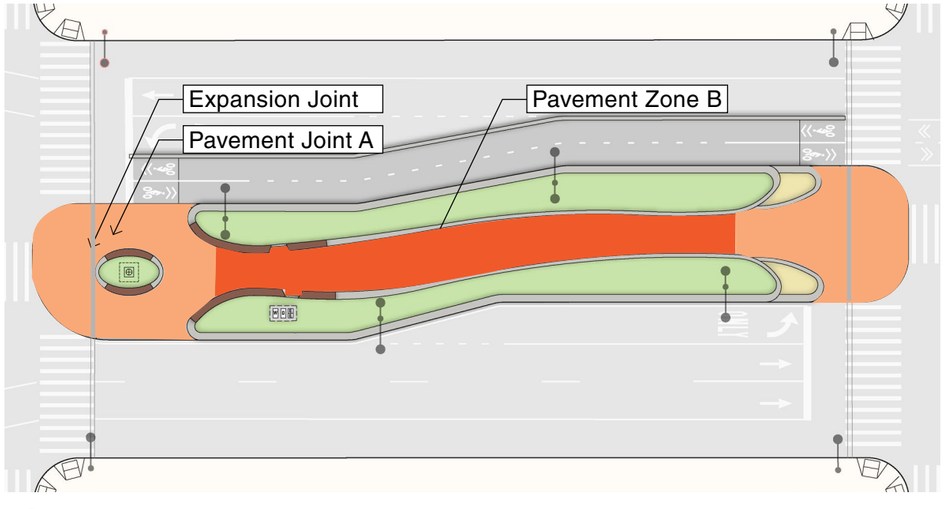


Unit Pavers in small and large format

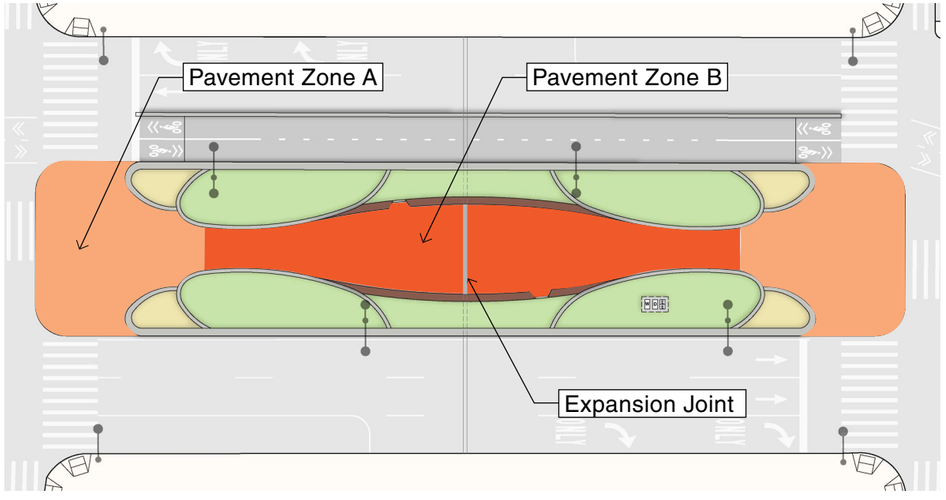
(JP Morgan Chase, 270 Park Avenue)

Paving

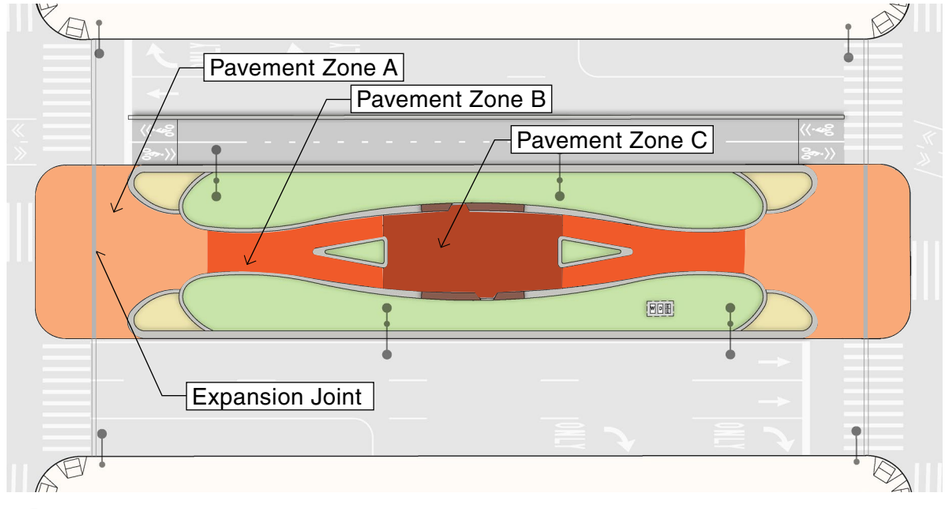
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



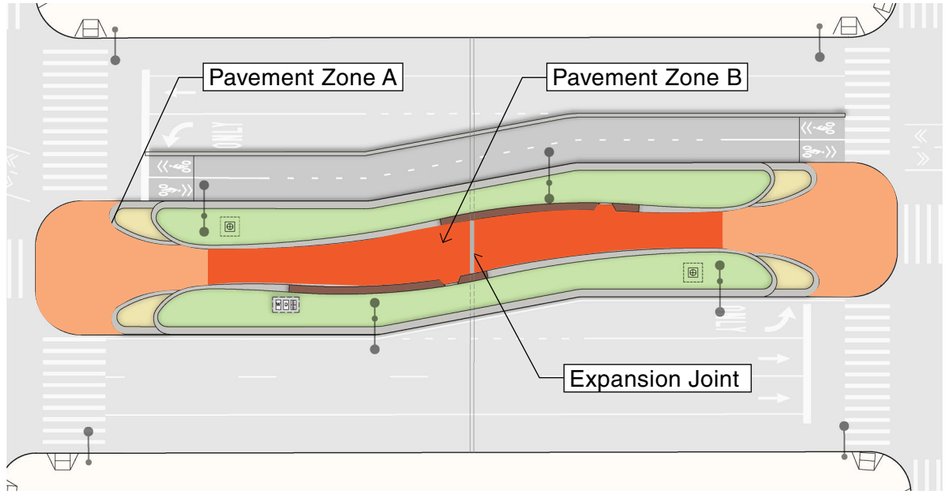
1 Typology 01: Entry Median



2 Typology 03: Formal Garden Median



3 Typology 02: Bosque Median



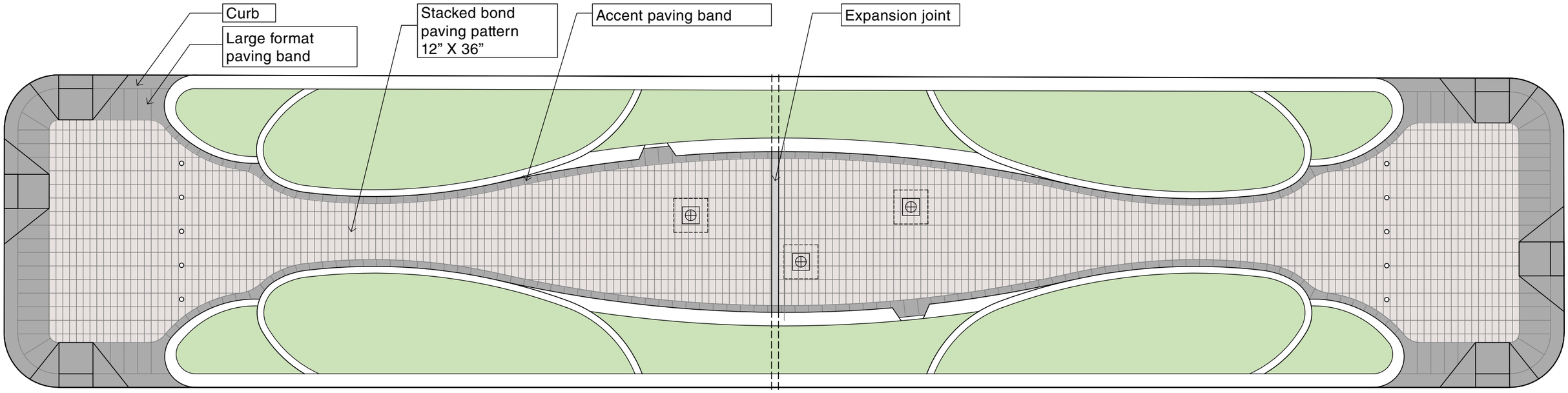
Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

0' 5' 10' 20' N

Paving Typology | Option 01

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

This paving approach explores the use of small, stacked-bond paving to establish a continuous ground plan throughout the median. Larger format pavers define the perimeter, following the curb edge and aligning with ADA ramps. An accent band responds to the geometry of the planter walls and highlights artwork within the central gathering area. Subtle changes in color reinforce the edges of the pedestrian zone and clarify circulation.

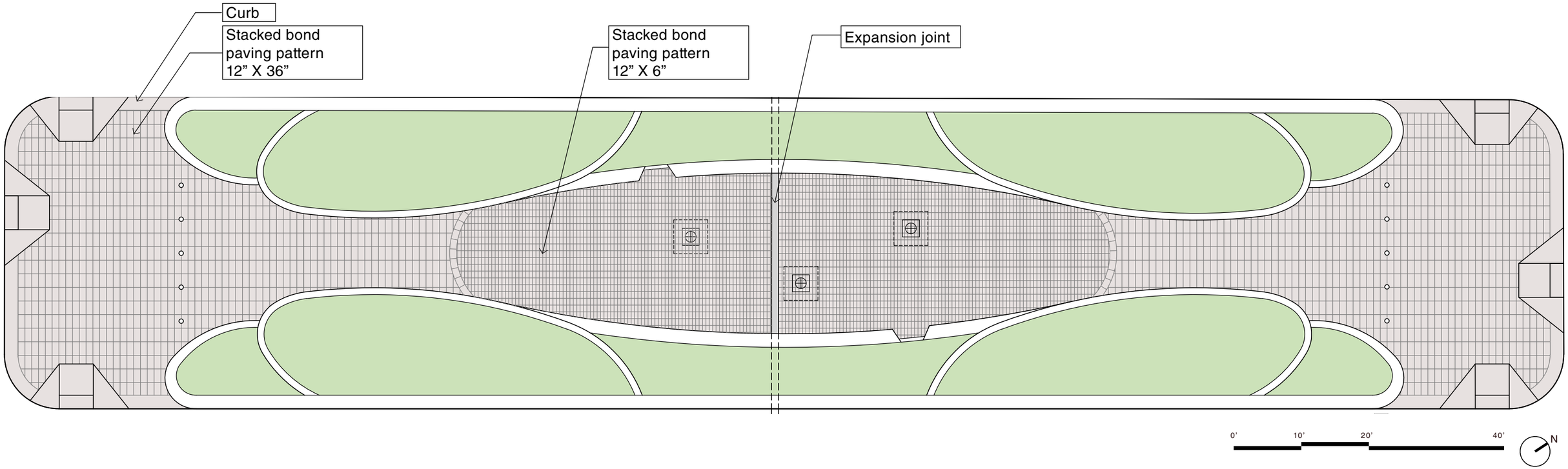


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Paving Typology | Option 02

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

The paving approach uses stacked-bond pavers at the median tips to reinforced the primary east-west and north-south pedestrian circulation. Within the central gathering area, smaller 6”x12” stacked-bond pavers create a finer grained, more park-like character around seating areas. A consistent color is maintained across the curb and paving, using changes in paver scale rather than color, to distinguish circulation.



Planter Walls and Seating

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Planter walls create a consistent form across the corridor. They serve as crash protection, provide soil depth for planting, and transform into seating elements. This approach aims to provide a mix of informal and structured seating opportunities that enhance comfort, encourage lingering, and respond to differing levels of social interaction and pedestrian use. Granite and precast concrete are being considered as wall material options. Wood toppers define intended seating areas while providing warmth and comfort. Material selection is dependent on the requirements and capabilities of the entity responsible for the long-term maintenance of the Park Avenue medians.



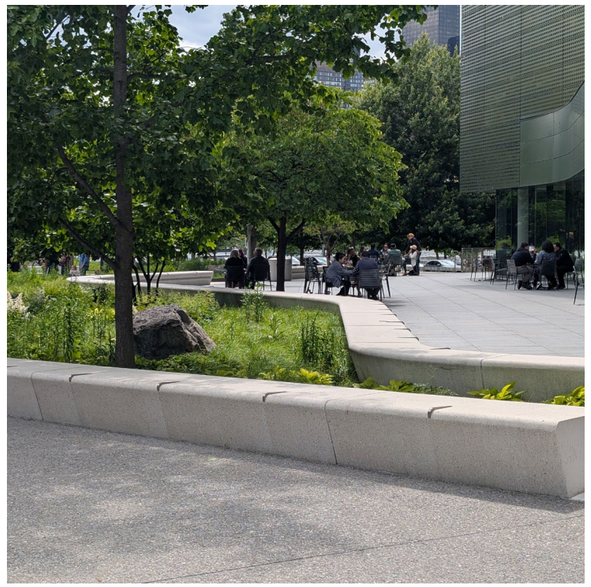
Granite planter walls

JP Morgan Chase, 270 Park Ave



Precast concrete planter wall with integrated backed seating

Cornell Tech Campus, NY



Precast concrete seating wall

Cornell Tech Campus, NY

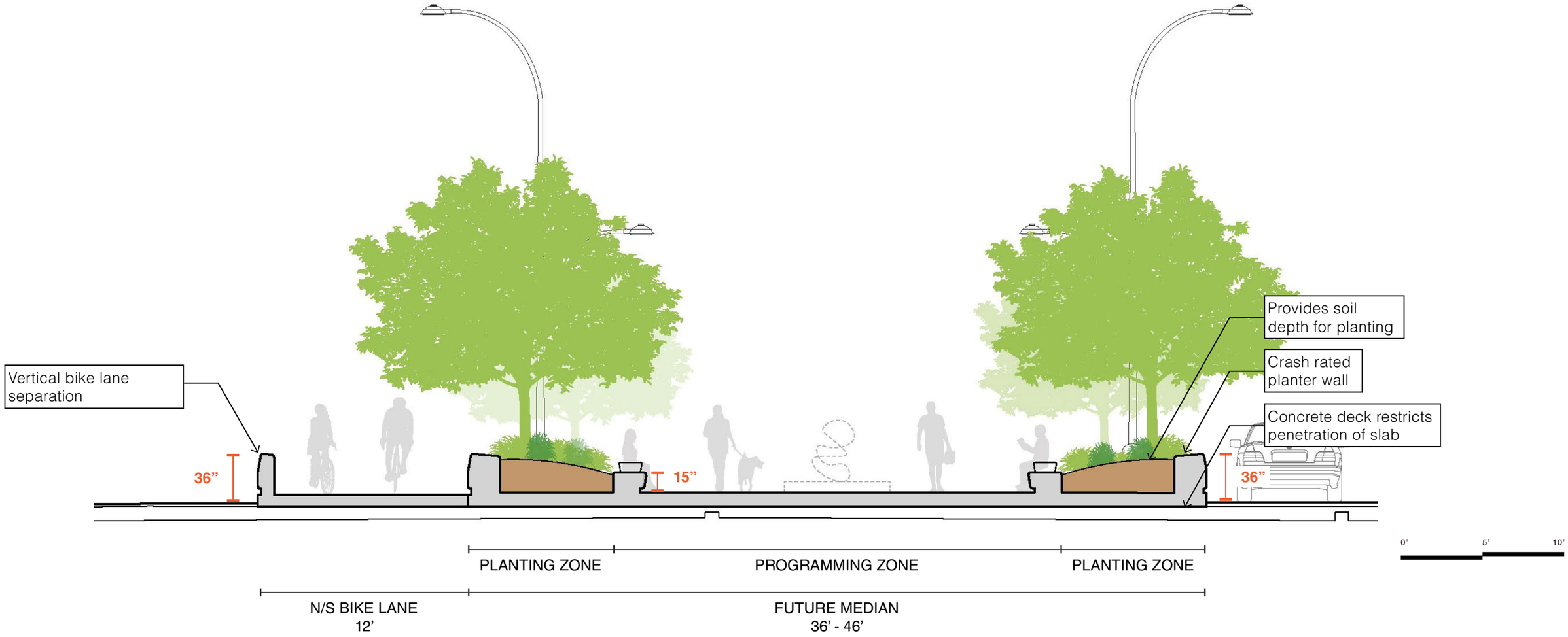


Wood bench toppers

East 92nd Street Plaza, NY

Planter Walls and Seating

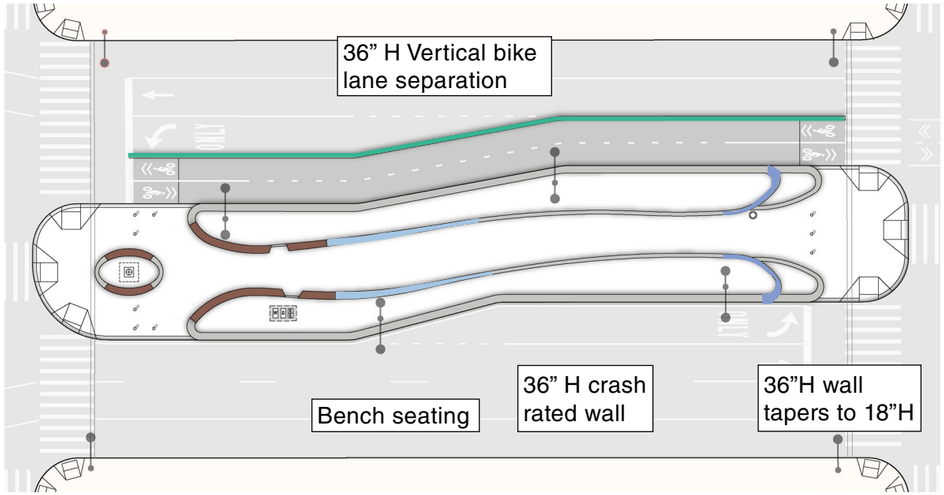
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



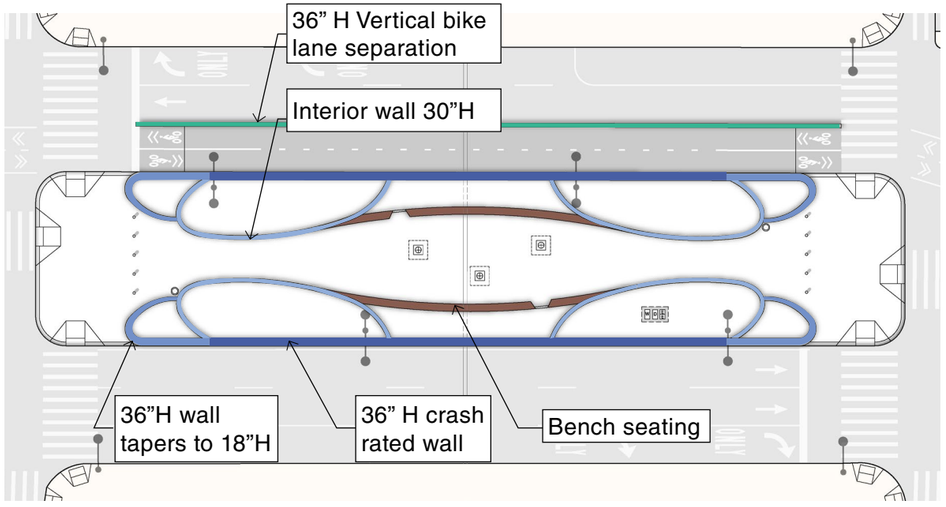
The planter walls are envisioned as multifunctional streetscape elements that will adhere to safety requirements, support tree health, and incorporate placemaking functions, creating a more cohesive corridor experience.

Planter Walls and Seating

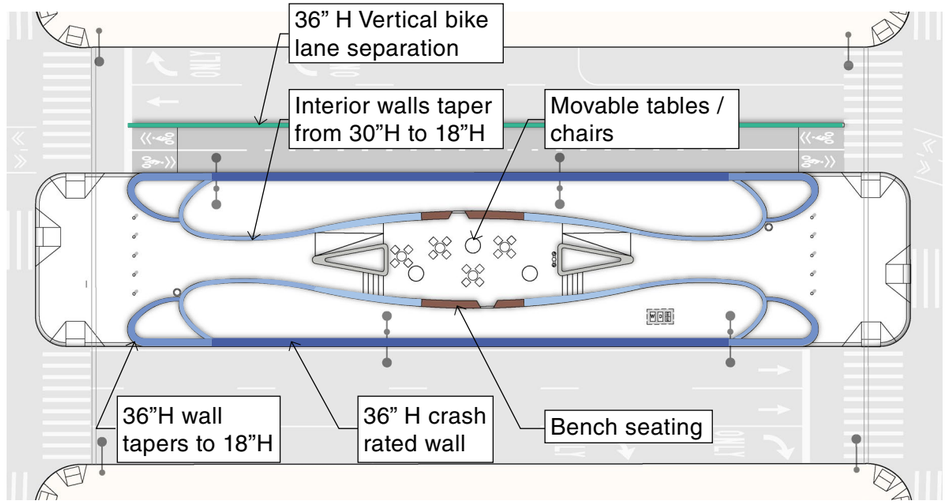
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



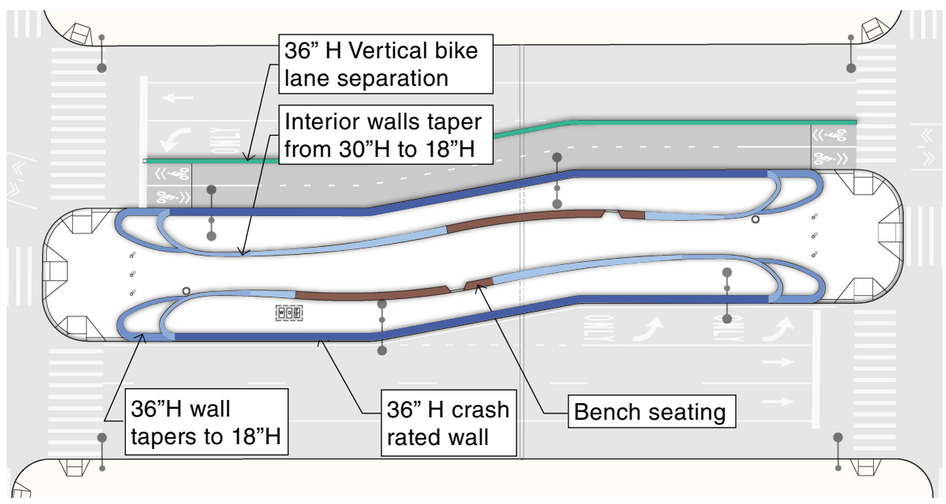
1 Typology 01: Entry Median



2 Typology 03: Formal Garden Median



3 Typology 02: Bosque Median

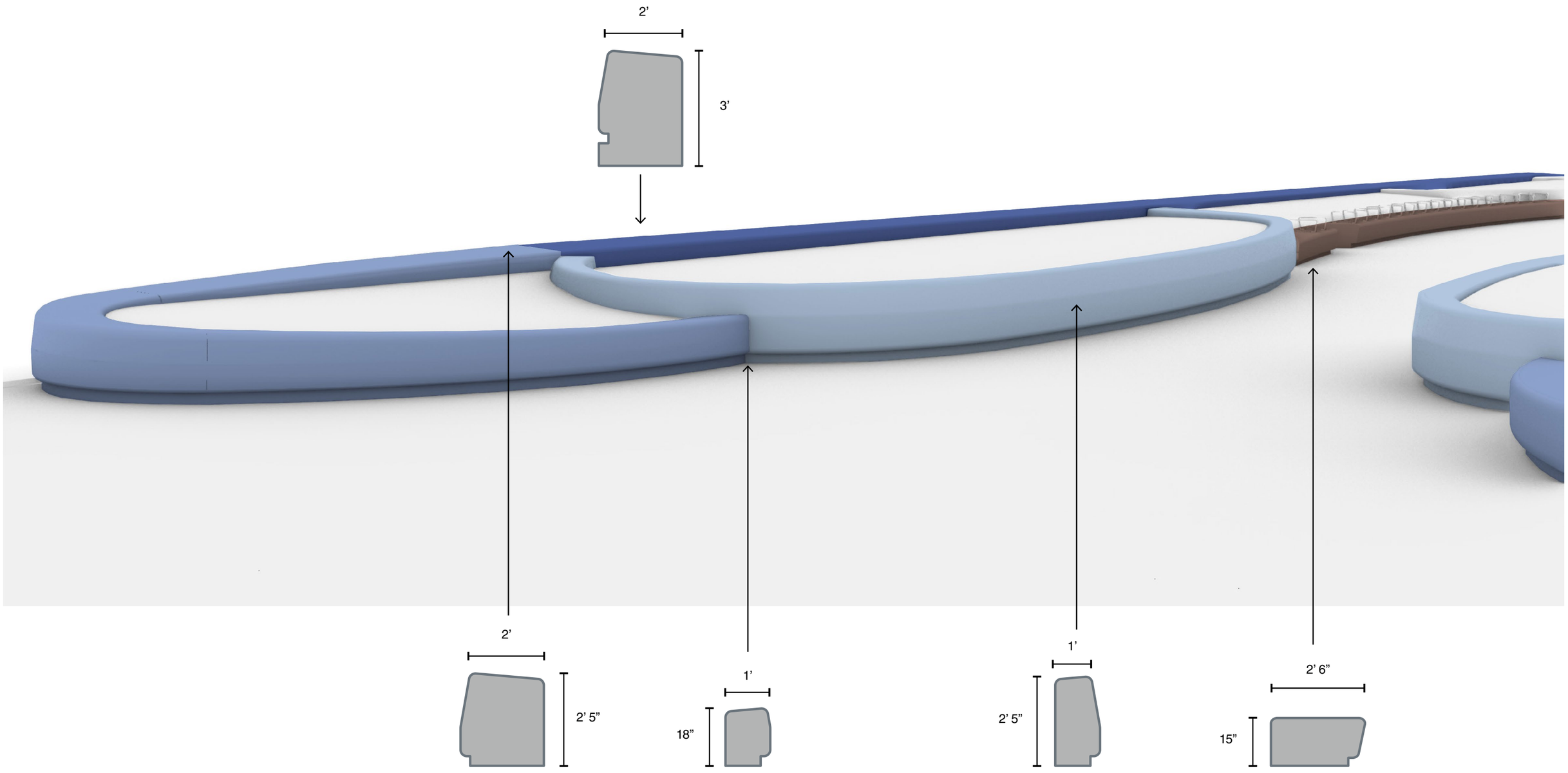


4 Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

0' 5' 10' 20' N

Planter Walls and Seating | Formal Garden Median

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

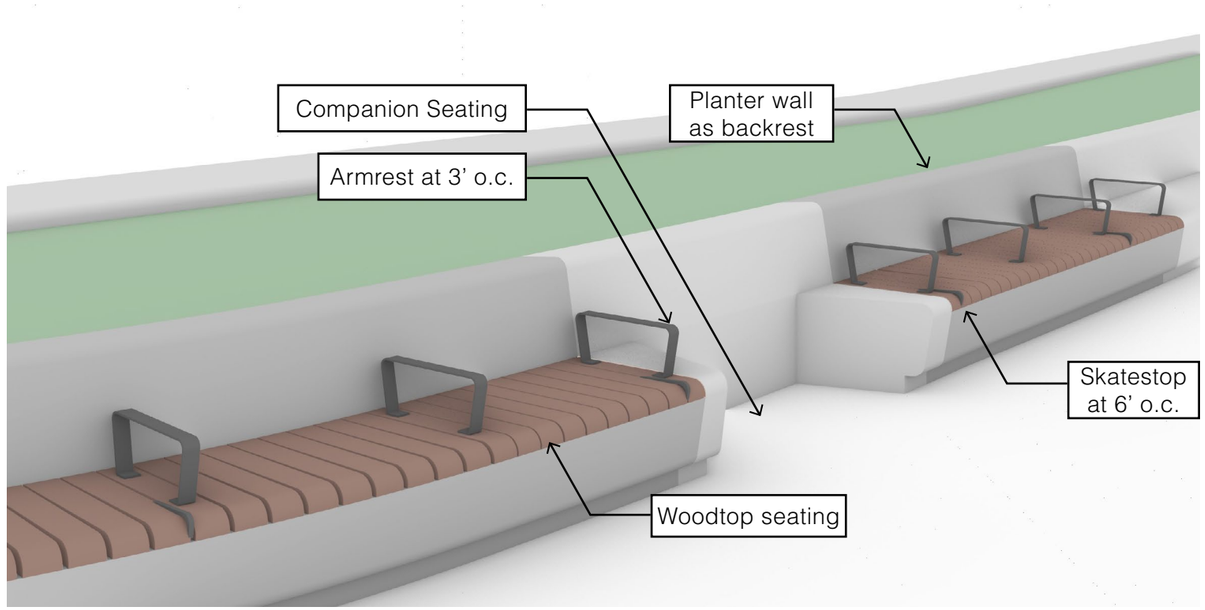


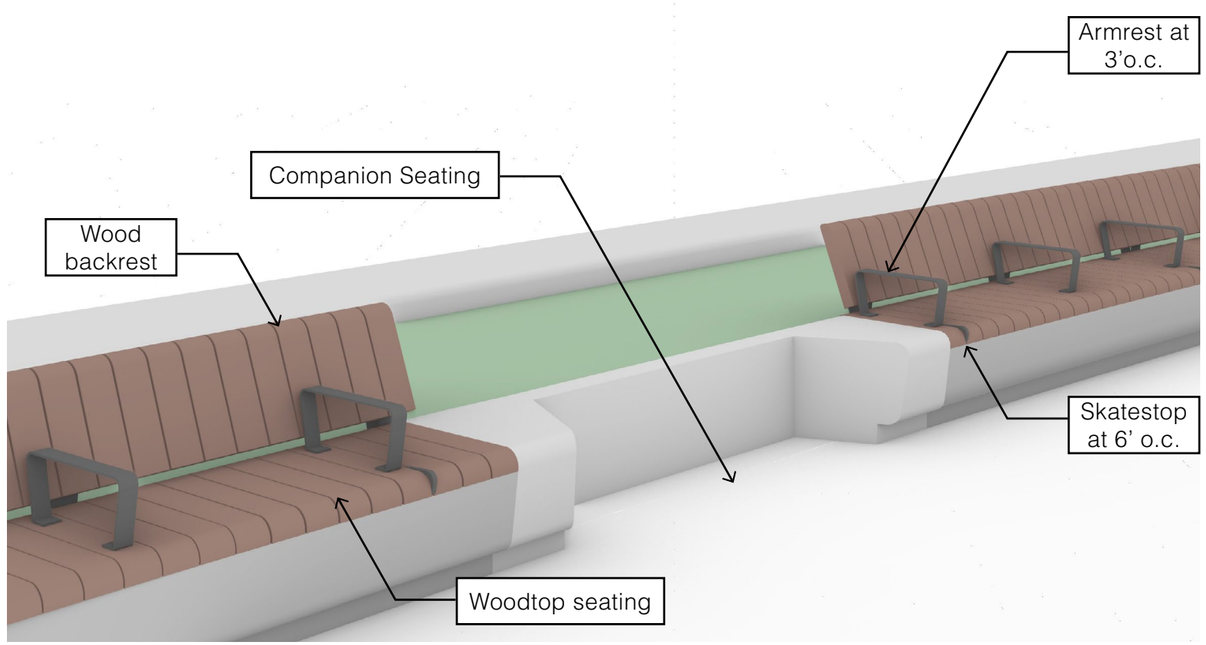
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Planter Walls and Seating

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Lowered planter walls accommodate seasonal planting displays while preserving views to adjacent plazas and surrounding iconic buildings. Integrated seating features, including companion seating, armrests, and skate deterrents, enhance comfort, accessibility, and durability.





Site Furnishings

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

A palette of site furnishings will be deployed throughout the medians and adjacent sidewalks to support a range of uses. Movable tables and chairs will provide flexible social seating and accommodate varied programming. Each median will include two trash receptacles, with drinking fountains provided in two medians. Materials and manufacturers for these elements are currently under development.



Moveable Seating

Plaza 33, NY



Trash cans

Victor Stanley metal trash cans, GCP

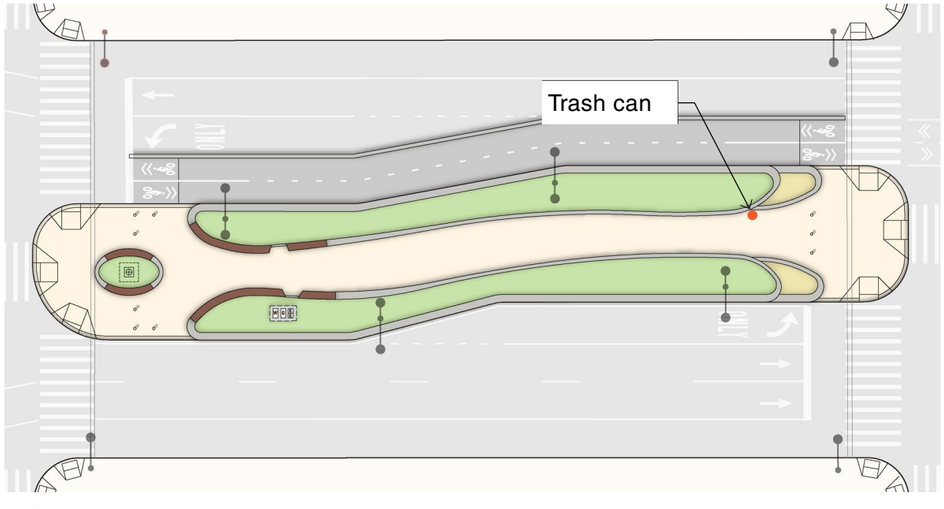


Drinking fountain

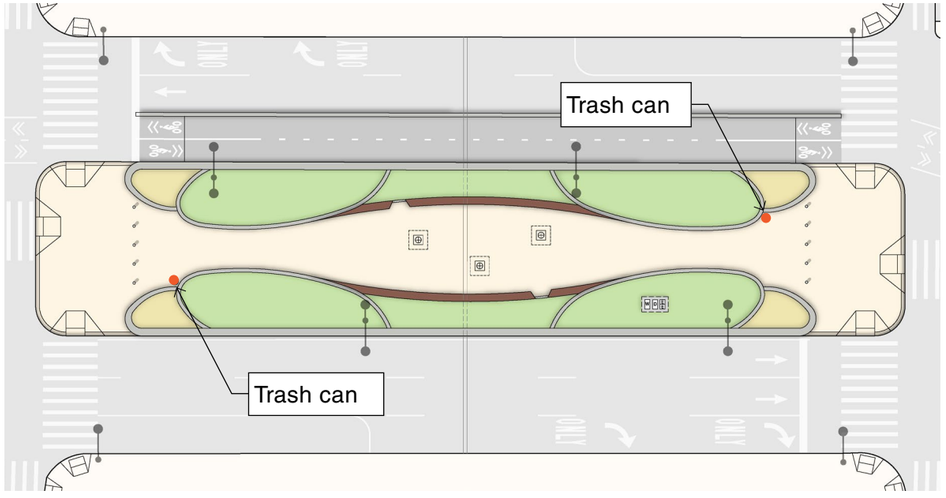
Murdock drinking fountain and bottle filler

Site Furnishings

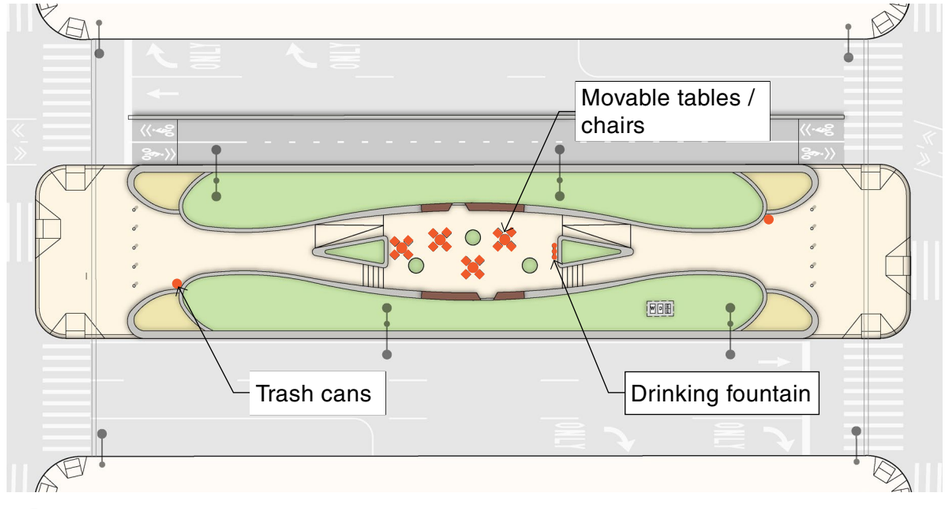
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



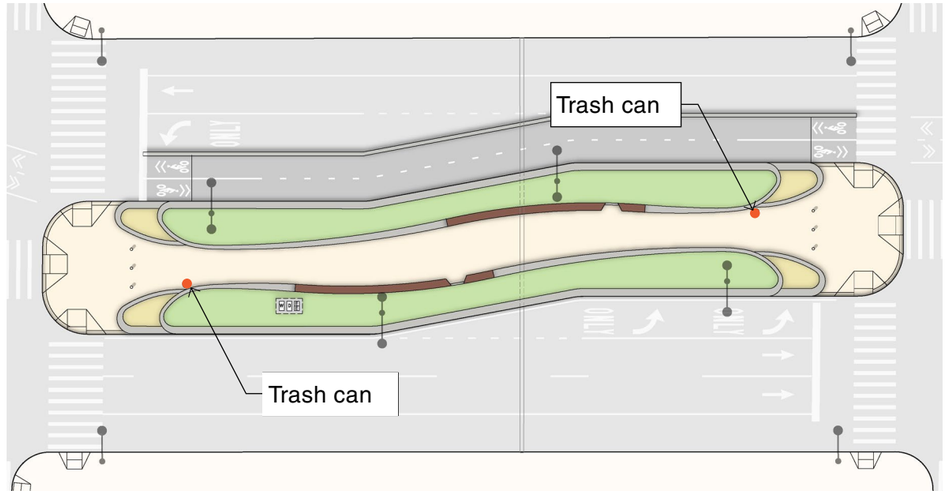
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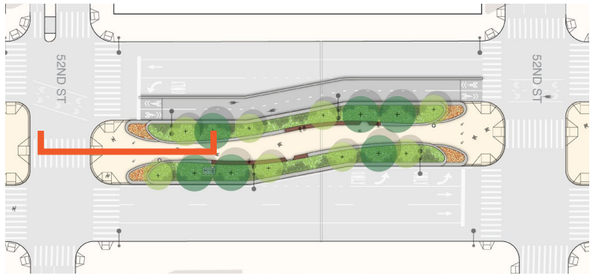
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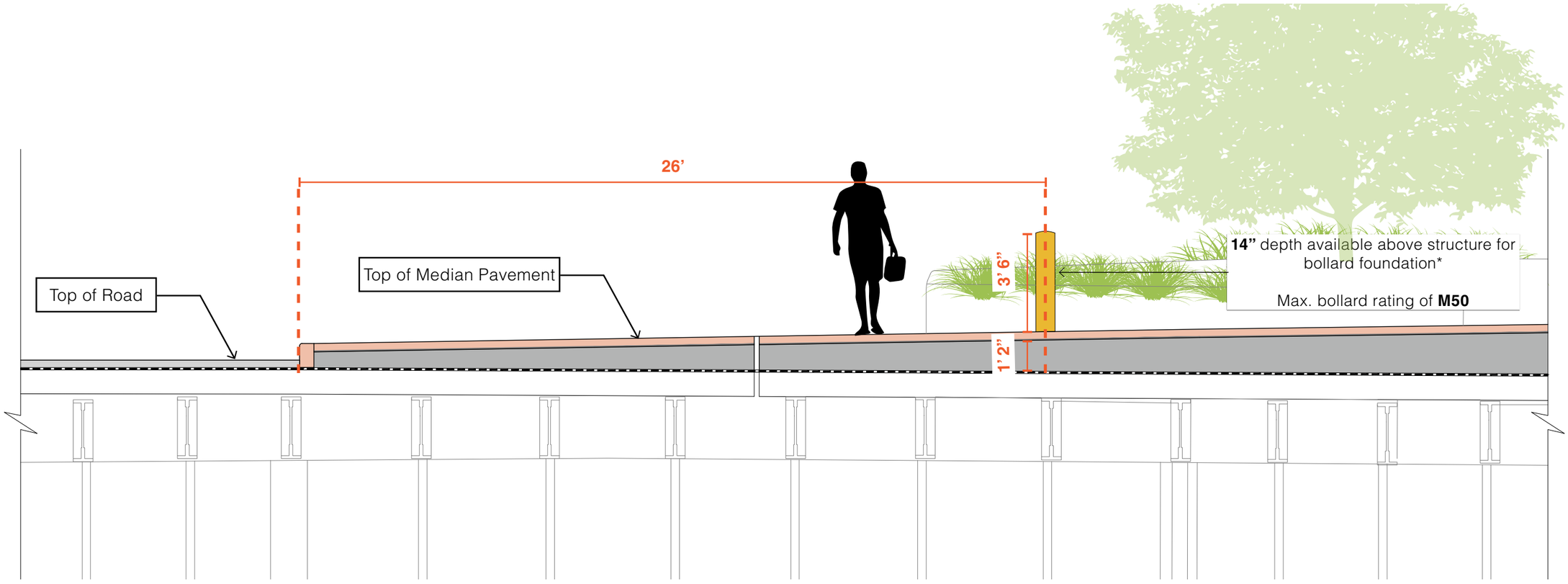
Bollards

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Pedestrian protection measures at median intersections include bollards positioned adjacent to planter walls while maintaining clear crosswalk access. Due to limited depth and MTA restrictions on anchoring to the new trainshed roof, bollards must be set back approximately 26 feet to accommodate an M50-rated foundation system. The layout is currently under review with NYPD Counter Terrorism.

KEY PLAN

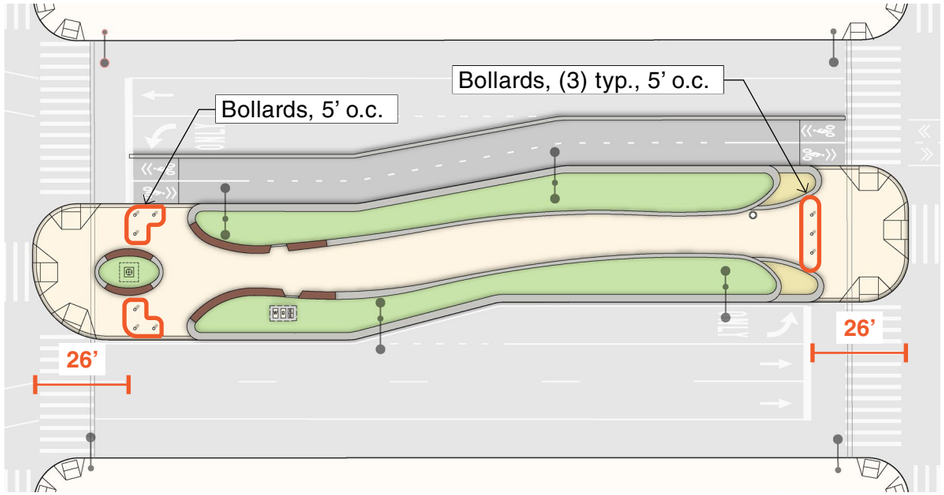




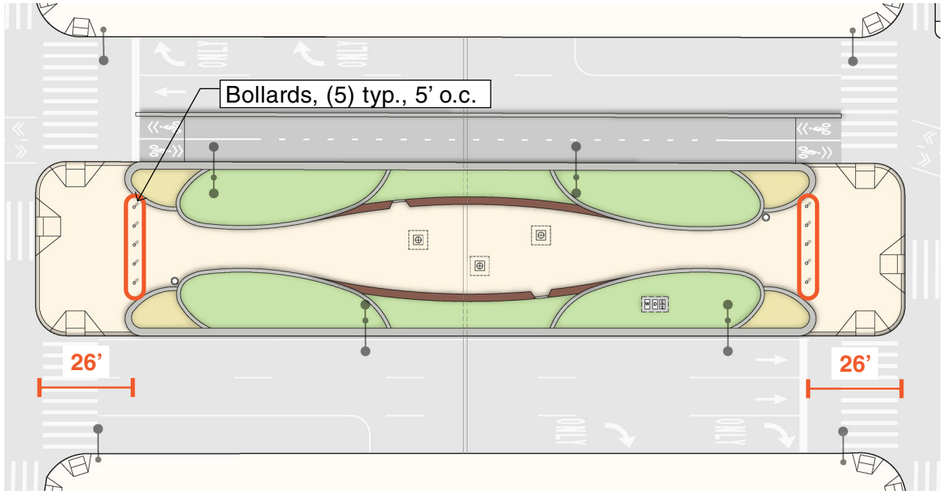
*Note: Ratings are based on ASTM F2656.

Bollards

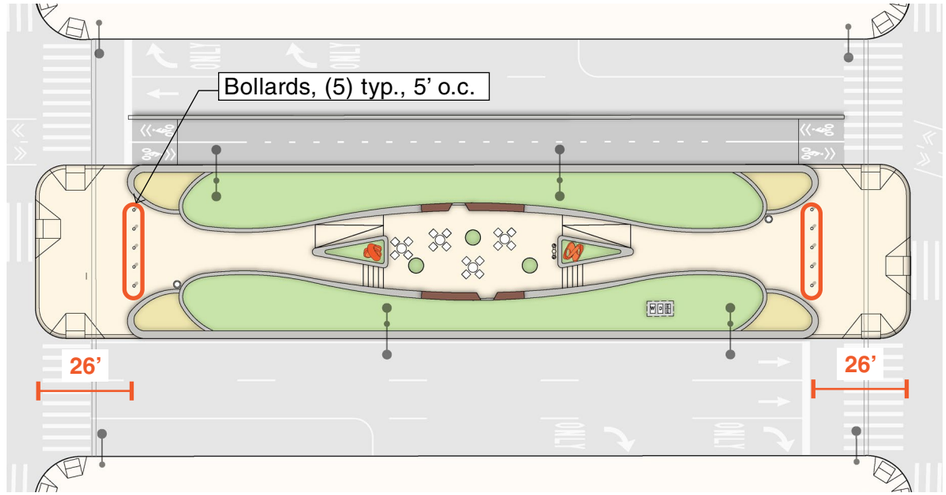
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



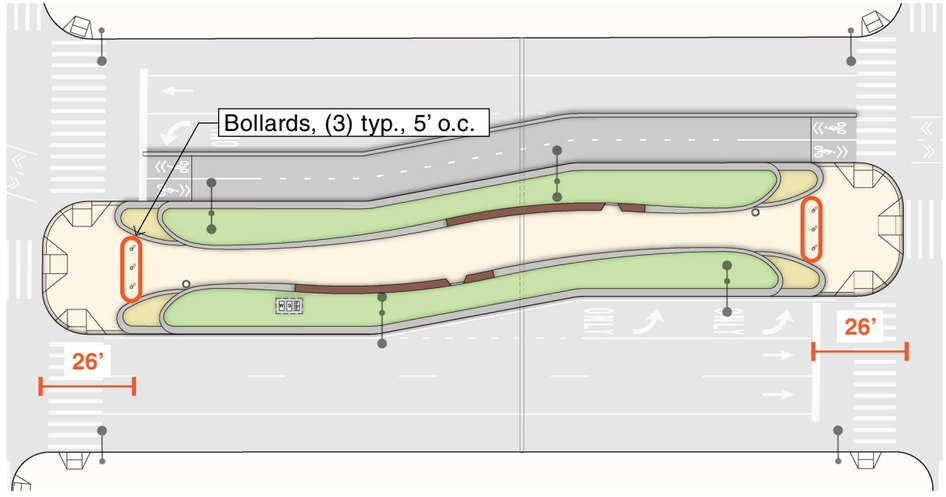
1 Typology 01: Entry Median



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Typology 02: Bosque Median



4 Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

0’ 5’ 10’ 20’ N

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Lighting

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

To create a unified lighting approach, the design team is evaluating two corridor lighting options: the standard NYCDOT 30-foot Davit pole with Stad luminaires and the GCP pole. The proposed layout includes street lights at cross street intersections and a combination of street and pedestrian-scale lighting within the median.





Street Light:
30’ Davit pole with Stad luminaire



Street and Pedestrian Light:
Grand Central Partnership Pole and luminaire

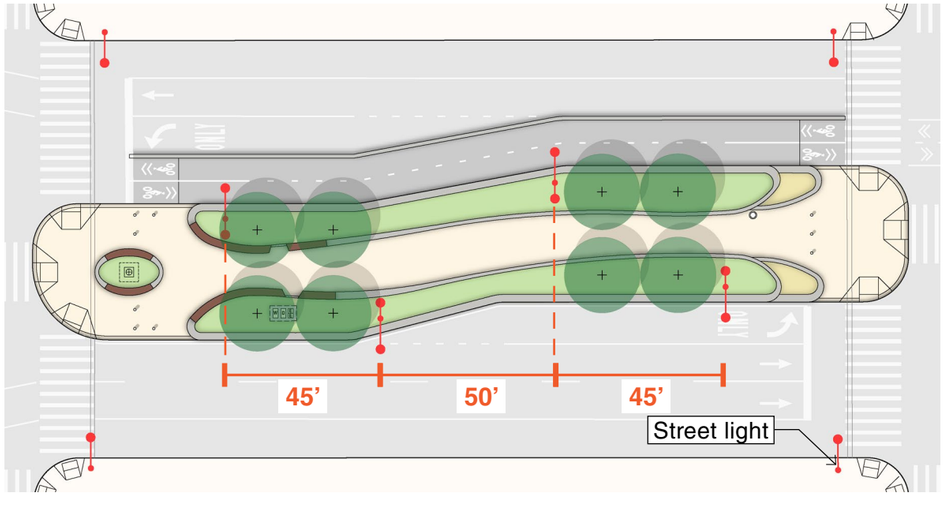
LEGEND

0’ 250’ 500’ N

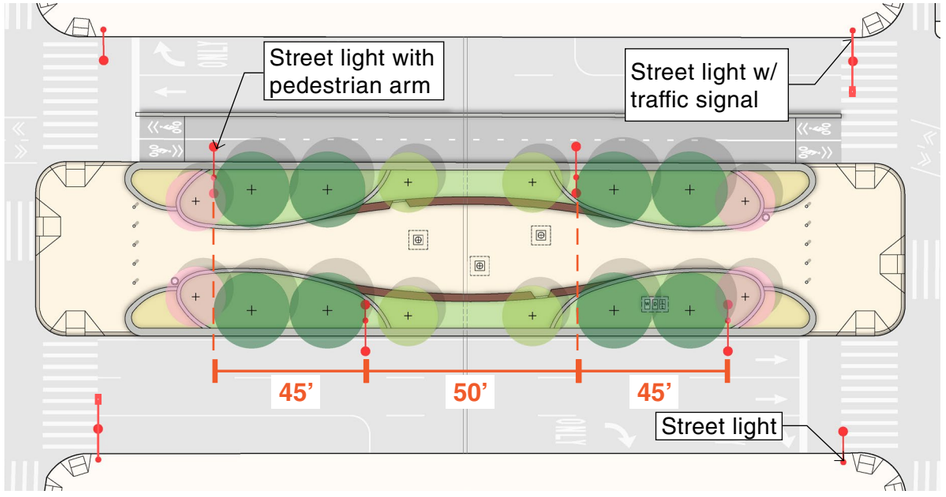
- Street Lighting
- Street Lighting with Pedestrian Arm
- Existing Side Street Lighting

Lighting

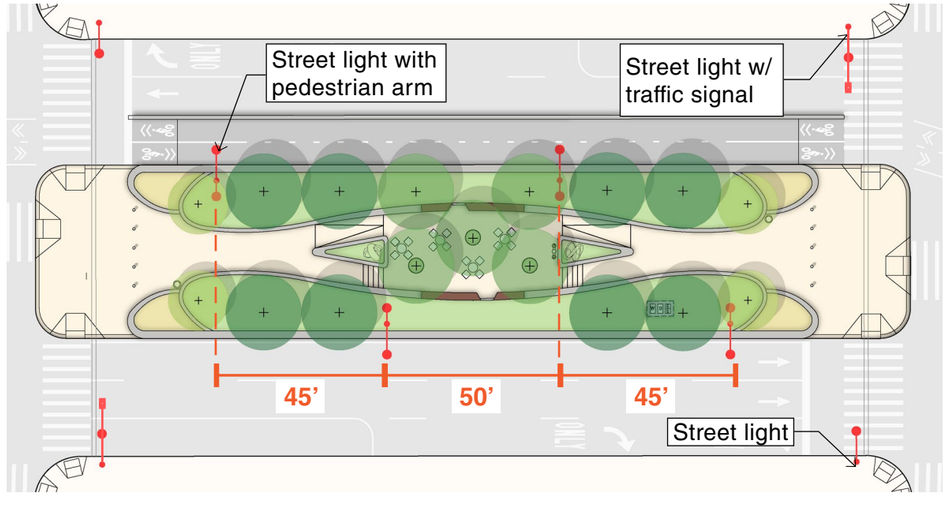
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



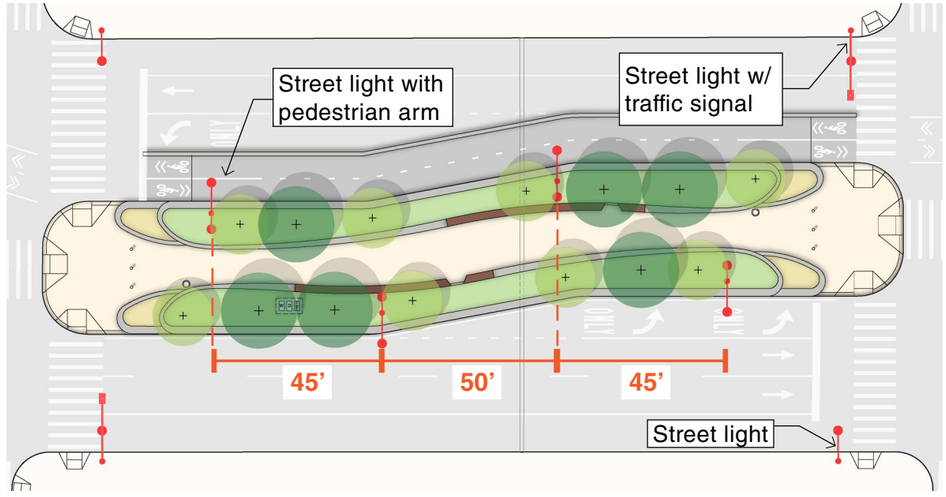
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Temporary Public Art

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 Art in Medians

Red NASA, Manolo Paz



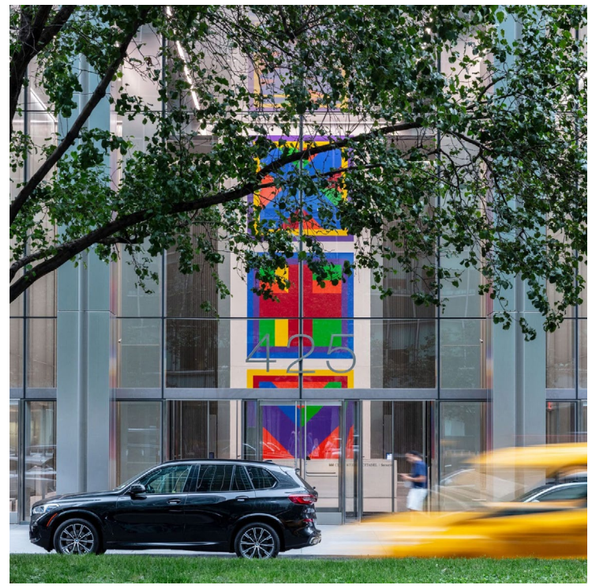
Public Art in Medians

Three Cathedrals, Manolo Paz



Art in Public Plazas

Pineapplesurprise & Robustfagotto,
John Chamberlain
Seagram Plaza

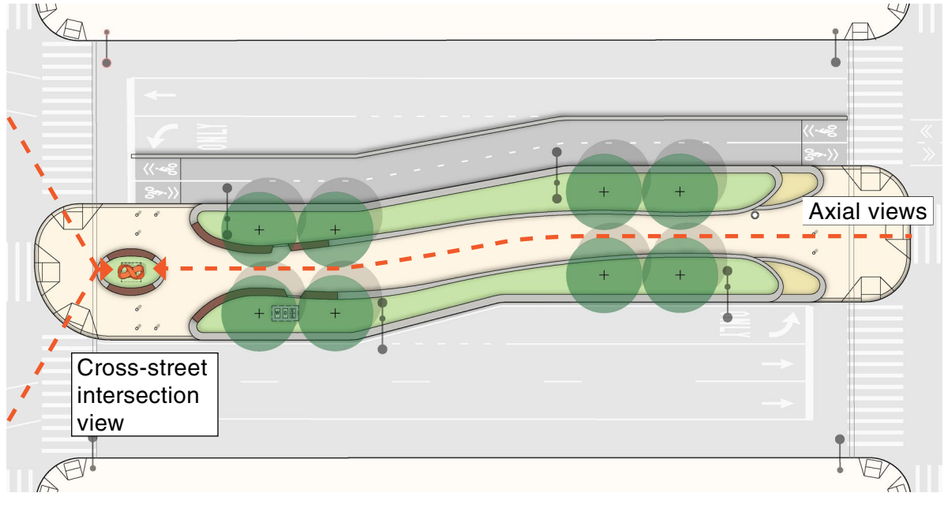


Art in Building Lobbies

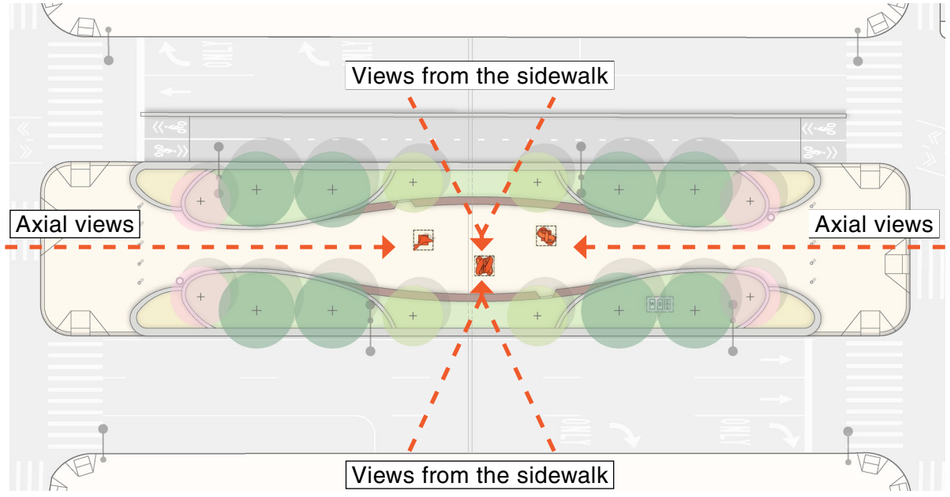
Bars of Color within Squares, Sol LeWitt
425 Park Avenue

Temporary Public Art

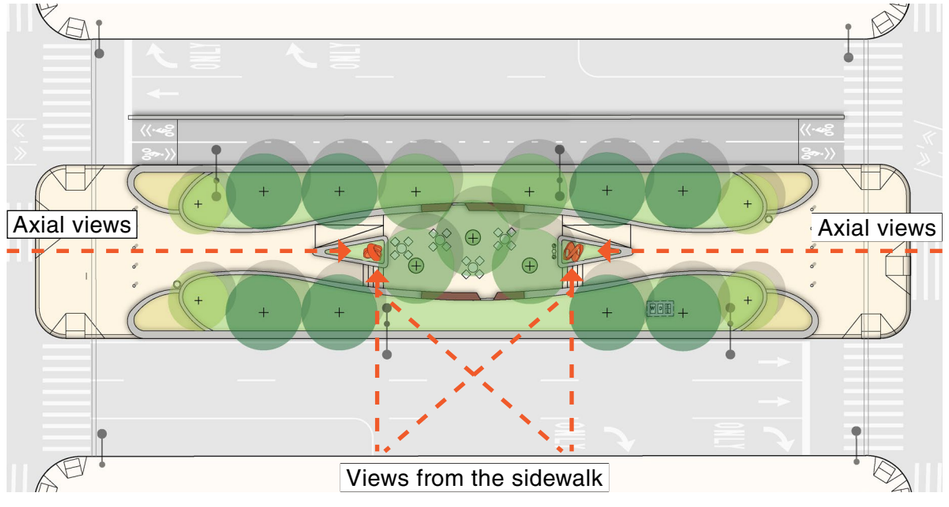
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



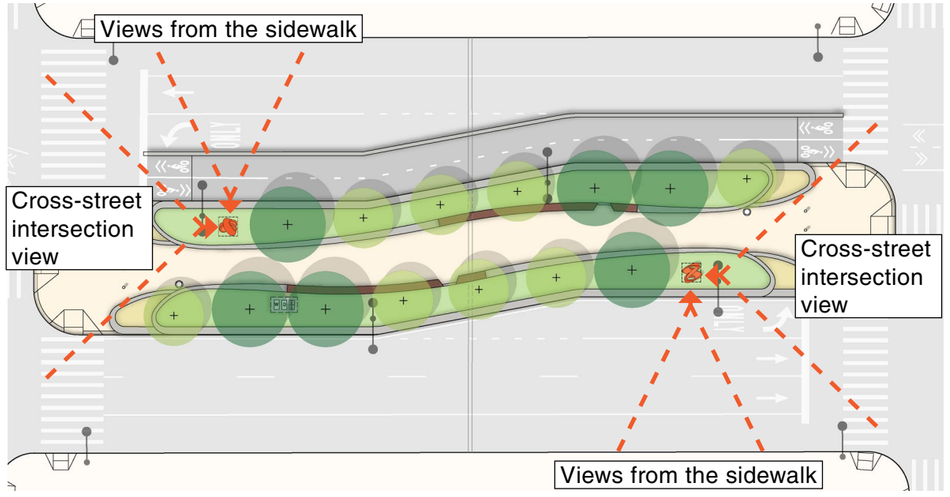
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4 Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

0' 5' 10' 20' N

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Formal Planting Tactics

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

The planting design features:

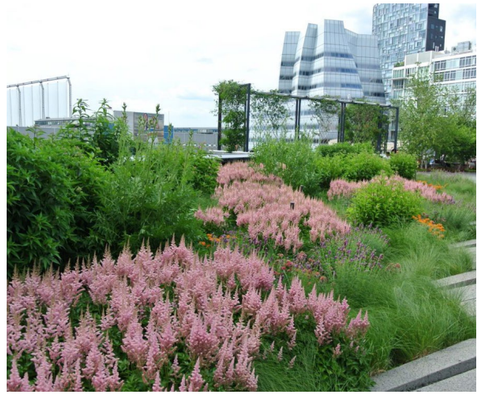
- Canopy trees that provide formal landscape architectural structure, reinforcing the linear elegance of the corridor while framing views to architectural features beyond and special features within the malls.
- Evergreen shrub masses to provide year-round structure as a backdrop for spreads of more colorful, diverse plantings.
- Attention to massing of ground plane species to create repetition and rhythm.



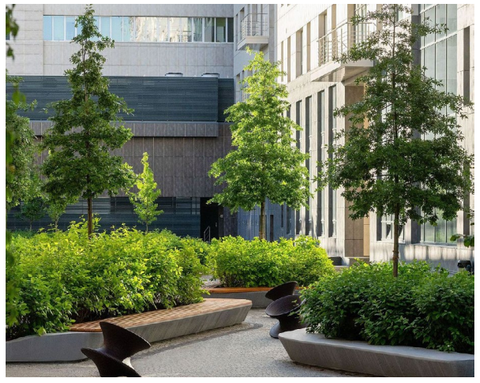
Symmetry
Establishes hierarchy and balance with central axis & repeated canopy



Structure
Defined plant edges with strong evergreen framework



Unified massing
Repeated drifts of one species



Rhythm & repetition
Repetition of species and form creates continuity



Restrained color palette
Intentional use of color to reinforce corridor elegance and create a vibrant garden experience.



Framing & focal features
Creates memorable destinations and directs attention

Plant Layers

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Planting layers will be used to achieve the formal planting character.











Shade trees

Primary architectural element

- Establish rhythm
- Reinforce symmetry
- Frame important architecture
- Define outdoor spaces
- Vertical sense of enclosure

Understory trees

Accent layer & punctuation

- Provide seasonal delight
- Soften transitions
- Mark intimate moments

Shrubs

Structural framework

- Evergreen structure
- Organize beds
- Define edges
- Year-round order

Perennials & grasses

Texture & seasonal character

Provide texture

- Create movement
- Soften edges
- Plant in large masses

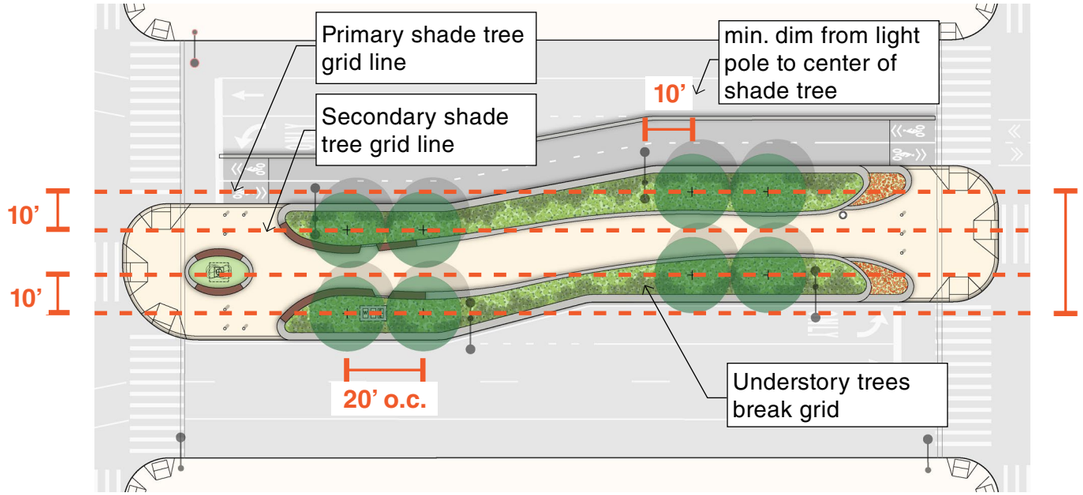
Seasonal planting

Reinforce identity

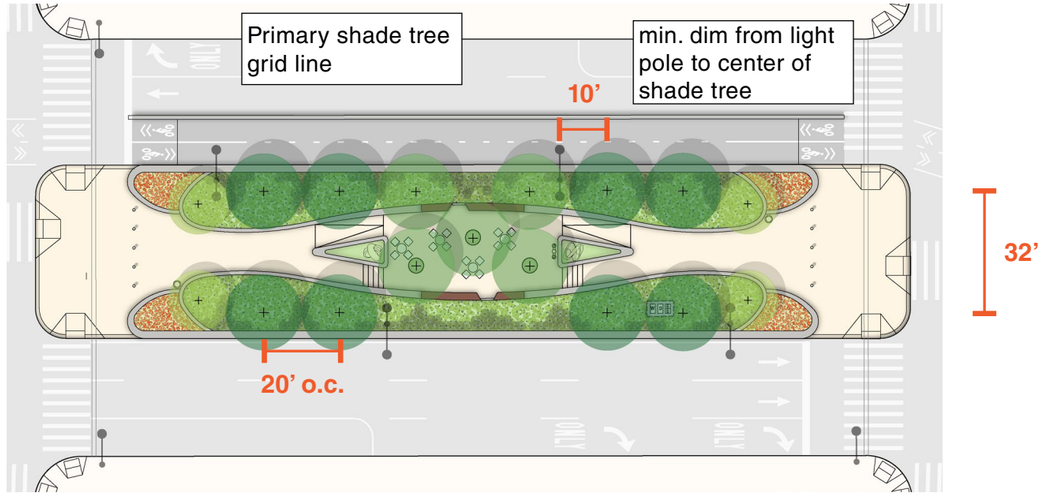
- Continue the fund for park avenue tradition
- Celebrate seasonal change
- Highlight public art
- Define median ends at intersections

Planting

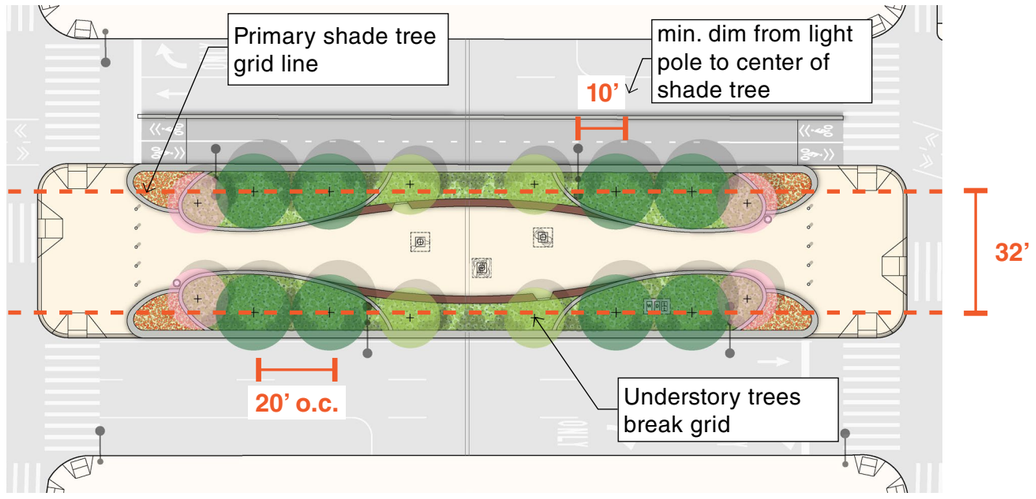
MATERIAL TOOLKIT



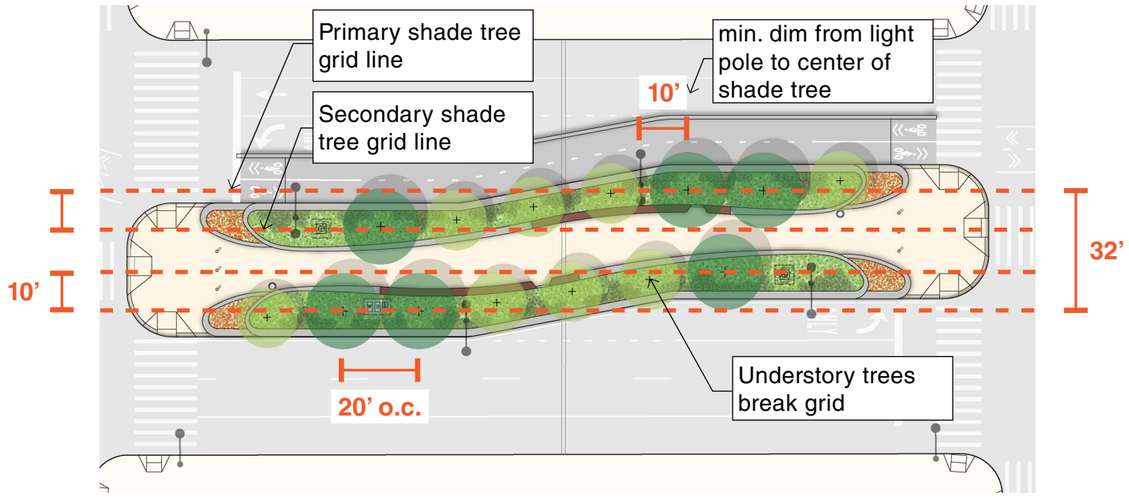
1 Typology 01: Entry Median



Typology 02: Bosque Median



2 Typology 03: Formal Garden Median



4 Typology 04: Turning Lane Median

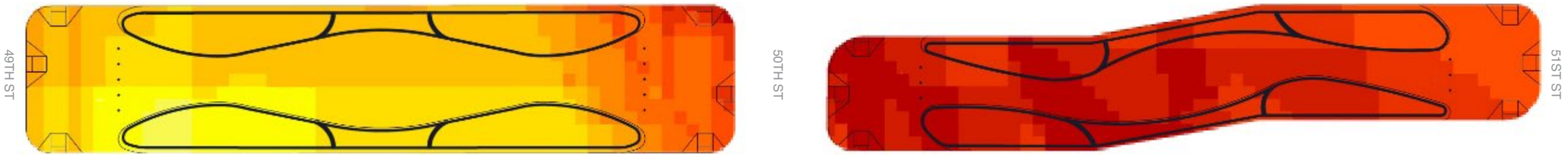
0’ 5’ 10’ 20’ N

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Climate Analysis | Cumulative Direct Sun Hours

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

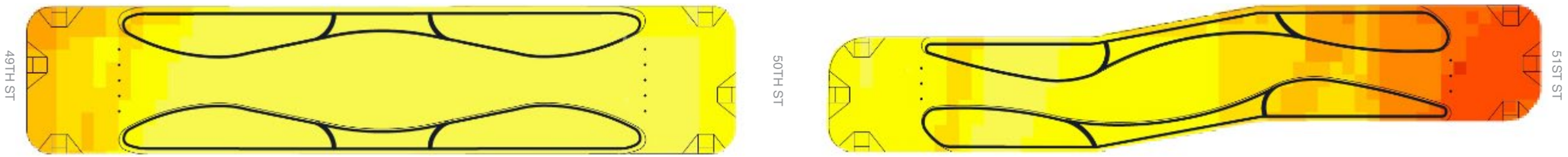
SUMMER SOLSTICE



1 - 3 Hours

4 - 6 Hours

SPRING / FALL EQUINOX



1 - 2 Hours

1 - 4 Hours

0' 25' 50' 100' N

Direct sunlight analysis was conducted to evaluate how much direct sunlight reaches the project area under existing surrounding conditions, including adjacent buildings, street geometry and other contextual obstructions. The analysis helps identify areas with consistent sunlight, partial exposure and persistent shading limitations.

LEGEND

Average Direct Sun Hours Per Day

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Tree Palette

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Celtis occidentalis

Hackberry





Cladastris kentuckea

American Yellowwood





Gymnocladus dioicus

Kentucky Coffeetree





Liquidambar styraciflua

Sweetgum





Part Sun (4 - 6 Hours)

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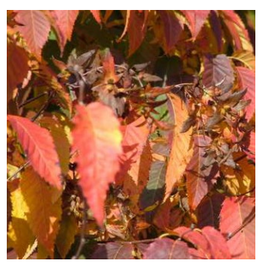
Understory Tree Palette

MATERIAL TOOLKIT

Carpinus caroliniana

American Hornbeam





Ostrya virginiana

American Hophornbeam





Cercis canadensis

Eastern Redbud





Hamamelis virginiana

Witchhazel





Magnolia virginiana

Sweetbay Magnolia





Shade (3 - 4 Hours)

Part Sun (4 - 6 Hours)

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Plant Palette | Shrubs

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Black Chokeberry
Aronia melanocarpa ‘Viking’



Red Chokeberry
Aronia arbutifolia



Japanese Holly
Ilex crenata ‘Compacta’



Virginia Sweetspire
Itea virginica



English Yew
Taxus baccata ‘Repandens’



Arrowwood Viburnum
Viburnum dentatum



Nannyberry
Viburnum lentago

Plant Palette | Perennials

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Dwarf Bluestar
Amsonia ‘Blue Ice’



Coral Bells
Heuchera americana ‘Dale’s Strain’



Eastern Red Columbine
Aquilegia canadensis



Golden Groundsel
Pakera aurea



Siberian bugloss
Brunnera macrophylla



Woodland Phlox
Phlox divaricata



Large leave aster
Eurybia macrophylla



Mountain Mint
Pycanthemum muticum

Plant Palette | Grasses & Ferns

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Appalachian sedge
Carex appalacia



Pennsylvania sedge
Carex pensylvanica



Broad Leaf sedge
Carex platyphylla



Japenese Forest Grass
Hakonechloa macra

Plant Palette | Seasonal Planting

MATERIAL TOOLKIT



Tulips



Begonias



Chrysanthemums

Concept Vision Plan Schedule

PROJECT SCHEDULE

