



**Testimony of Kenyattah A. Robinson, President & CEO  
Mount Vernon Triangle Community Improvement District  
Committee of the Whole Virtual Budget Hearing  
Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Friday, June 25, 2021 at 9:00 AM EDT**

Good morning Chairman Mendelson and members of the committee. My name is Kenyattah Robinson and I'm the President & CEO of the Mount Vernon Triangle Community Improvement District ("Mount Vernon Triangle CID" and "MVT CID"), established in 2004 as one of DC's now-11 Business Improvement Districts. I come before you today on our community's behalf to request that the District government commit to a long-term capital budget investment of approximately \$10 million over the next three fiscal years in support of creating a network of public space resources, amenities, and enhancements for our Mount Vernon Triangle community on publicly owned, shovel-ready sites that are available today. Included with my testimony are additional materials and information in support of this request.

In addition to being vital to the continued positive transformation of our rapidly growing community, we believe this to be a prudent municipal investment – much like the public space investments that were made in the Capitol Riverfront/Navy Yard district and in NoMa – that will quickly pay for itself while adding positive impacts to our city's tax base for years to come. Valuable short- and long-term economic development gains will be provided to the District in the form of jobs, infrastructure spending, enhanced livability, return-to-office benefits, and incremental value appreciation for adjacent properties with dividends that revert to the city in support of other much-needed social priorities.

Communities have come to recognize and appreciate the value of public investment in parks and other open spaces as vehicles to attract and retain residents, businesses, workers, customers, and visitors. Yet the District's own planning studies cite Mount Vernon Triangle as an area that possesses a significant deficit of open space relative to its population.<sup>1</sup> And in our annual Neighborhood Perception Survey, residents repeatedly rate the lack of greenspace as a top five reason for leaving our community, with just one out of four residents in a recent survey saying there is sufficient quality and availability of space in Mount Vernon Triangle.

And that's why central to our request is that funding be provided to support our efforts to achieve the community's strong and overwhelming desire to "re-imagine" Cobb Park – a critical component in the fabric of our city's land use and planning infrastructure – and transform it into an iconic destination, civic and gathering space, and gateway into Mount Vernon Triangle and downtown DC. Following years of needs assessment, study and advocacy alongside the community, we were able to surface and solidify an initial investment of \$500,000 already in the District budget for the Phase 1 reactivation of Cobb Park once Property Group Partners – developers of the Capitol Crossing project – returned the site to the city. Phase 1 reactivation was initially slated for completion Spring 2021 but faced delays due to rising

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<sup>1</sup> DPR's "Play DC" master planning effort identified the Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood as having the ninth-most populous area in the District, but the fourth-lowest provision of open space out of 45 areas in the District, with three-times the number of residents per playground in the MVT-area as compared to the District average.

materials costs. We've received verbal notification from DC's Department of Parks & Recreation that the additional funding needed to commence Phase 1 rehab activities has been secured and that the project's start is imminent. The site is currently fenced from public access with landscaping services being provided by DC's Department of General Services and daily monitoring along with periodic maintenance being provided by the Mount Vernon Triangle CID.

Also included in our request is funding for National Park Reservation 74, known as Milian Park, located at the intersection of 5th Street NW & Massachusetts Avenue NW. As one of the "bow-tie" parks that lead into Mount Vernon Square, Milian Park is critical to our smaller-scale, community-based activations. However, it stands to benefit from additional upgrades such as lighting and landscaping to further enhance its appeal to our community. Specific to this investment, we would partner with NPS and leverage authorities like those utilized for the renovation of other federal assets in the District<sup>2</sup> to effectuate these improvements.

Identified in an attachment to this testimony are the owners of residential, commercial, faith-based, hospitality and stand-alone retail properties in our community who have reaffirmed their long-standing support of this specific request as a cornerstone of our long-standing work to acquire more green, open, and public use spaces in Mount Vernon Triangle. This request is also supported by previous planning studies<sup>3</sup> as well as specific language in the just-passed *Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2021*<sup>4</sup> that calls for improvement of "the network of public open spaces in the Mount Vernon Square and Mount Vernon Triangle areas to meet the needs of residents, workers, and visitors" with "[s]pecial attention... given to enhancing the bow-tie shaped park reservations on Massachusetts and New York Avenues NW and improving Cobb Park, at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and H Street NW, to serve the recreation and open space needs of the surrounding community."

Thank you again for allowing me to testify on this very important budget issue that we deem to be a critical priority for our community and city. We appreciate your consideration of this request and are happy to answer any questions that you may have.

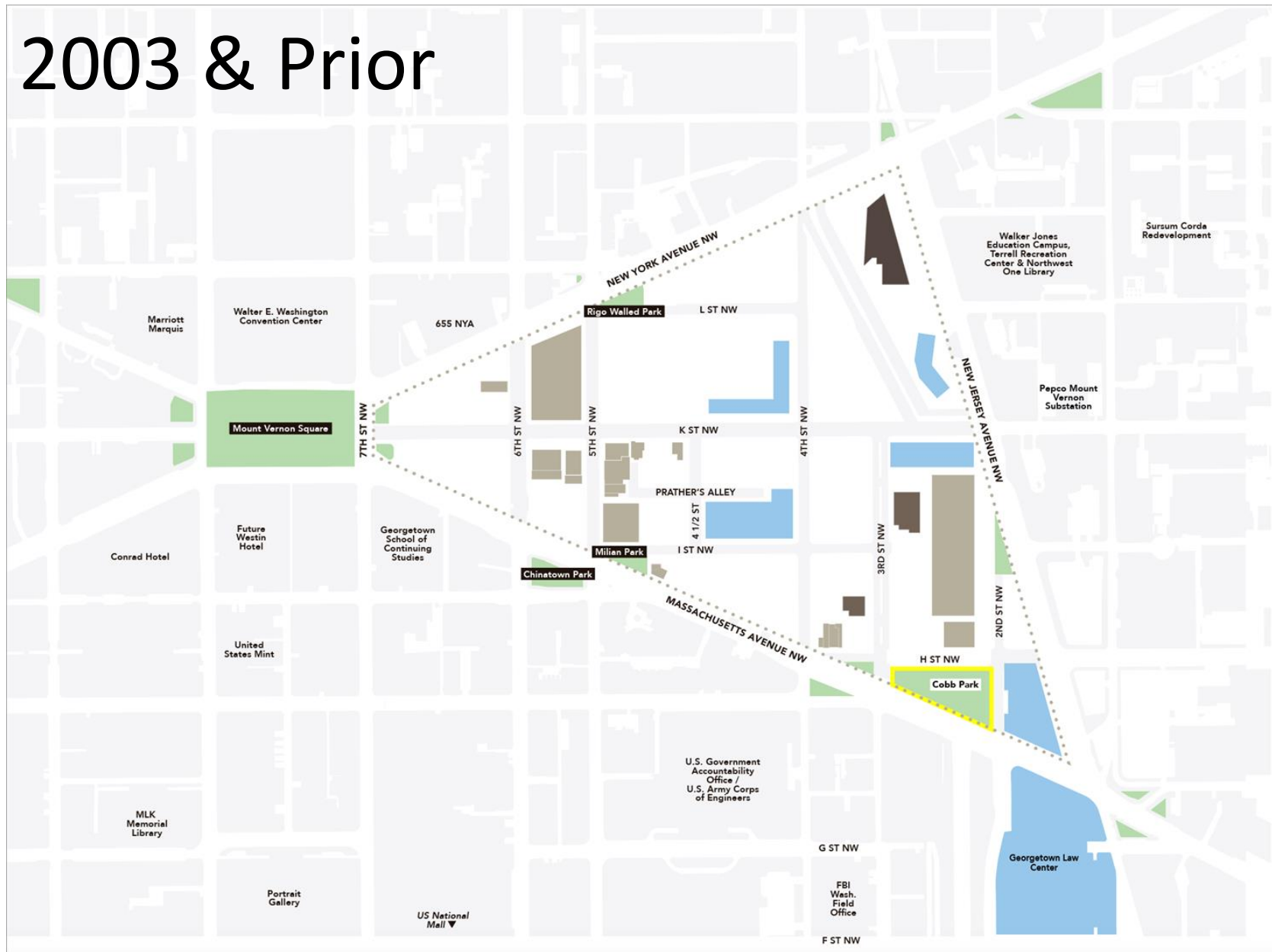
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<sup>2</sup> Notable examples include Farragut Square and Franklin Park.

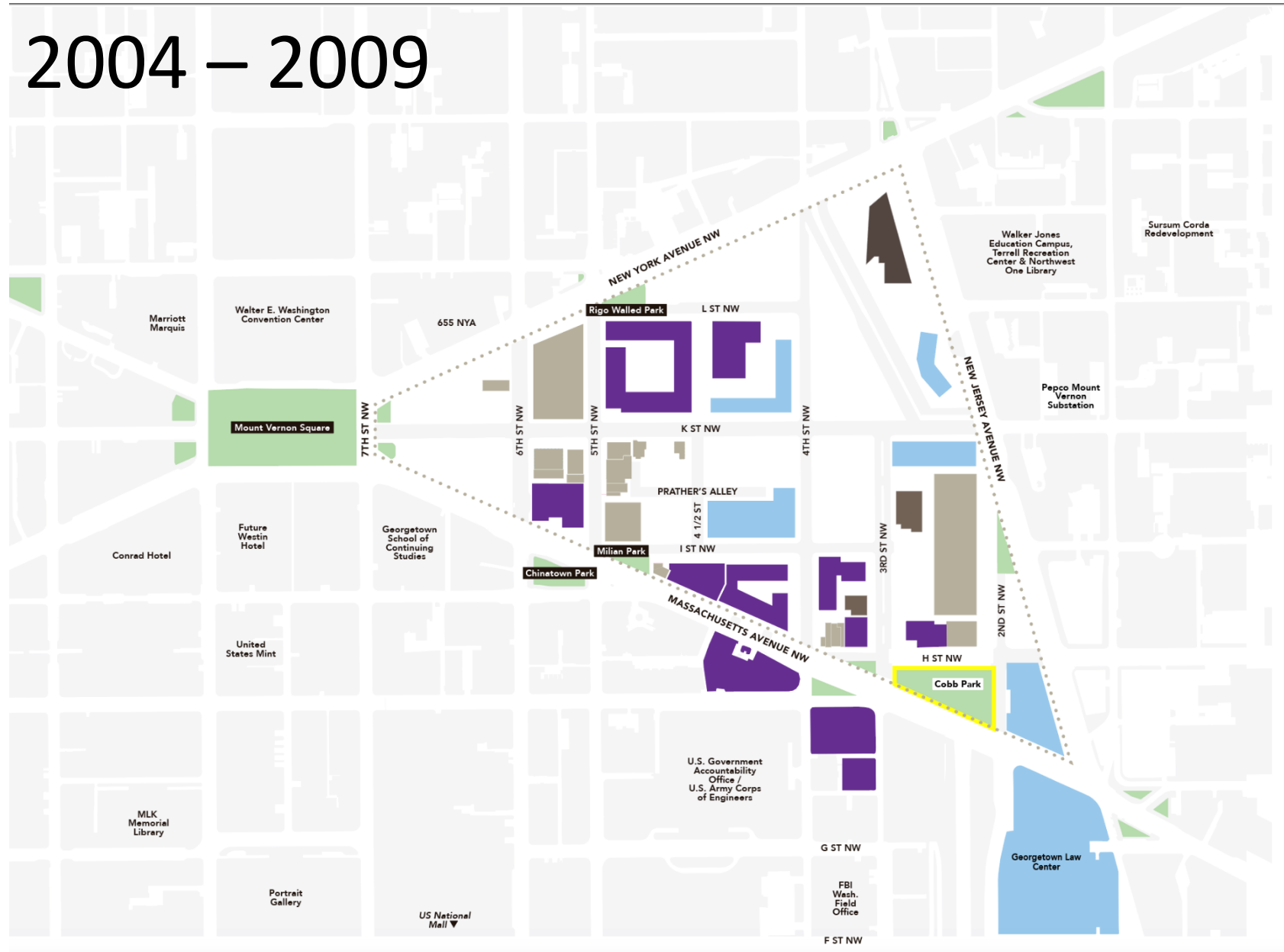
<sup>3</sup> Previous planning efforts include the framework Mount Vernon Triangle Action Agenda for creating a vibrant new downtown neighborhood (published 2003), the Mount Vernon Triangle Transportation and Public Realm Design Report (published 2006), the community-led MVT Open Space Study Report (published 2018), and the more recent Downtown East Re-Urbanization Strategy (published 2019).

<sup>4</sup> See §1614.11 of the *Comprehensive Plan Amendment Act of 2021*.

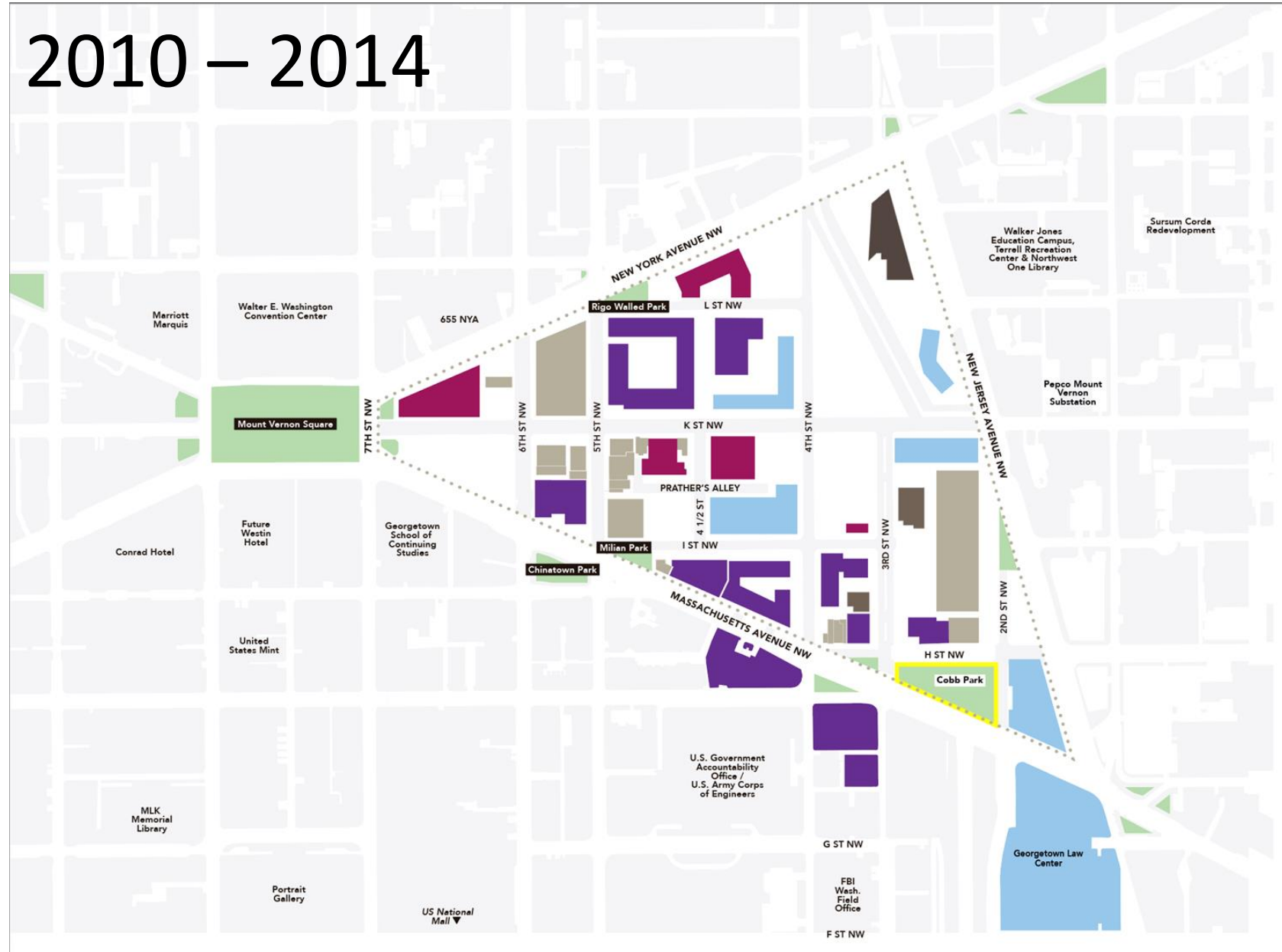
# 2003 & Prior



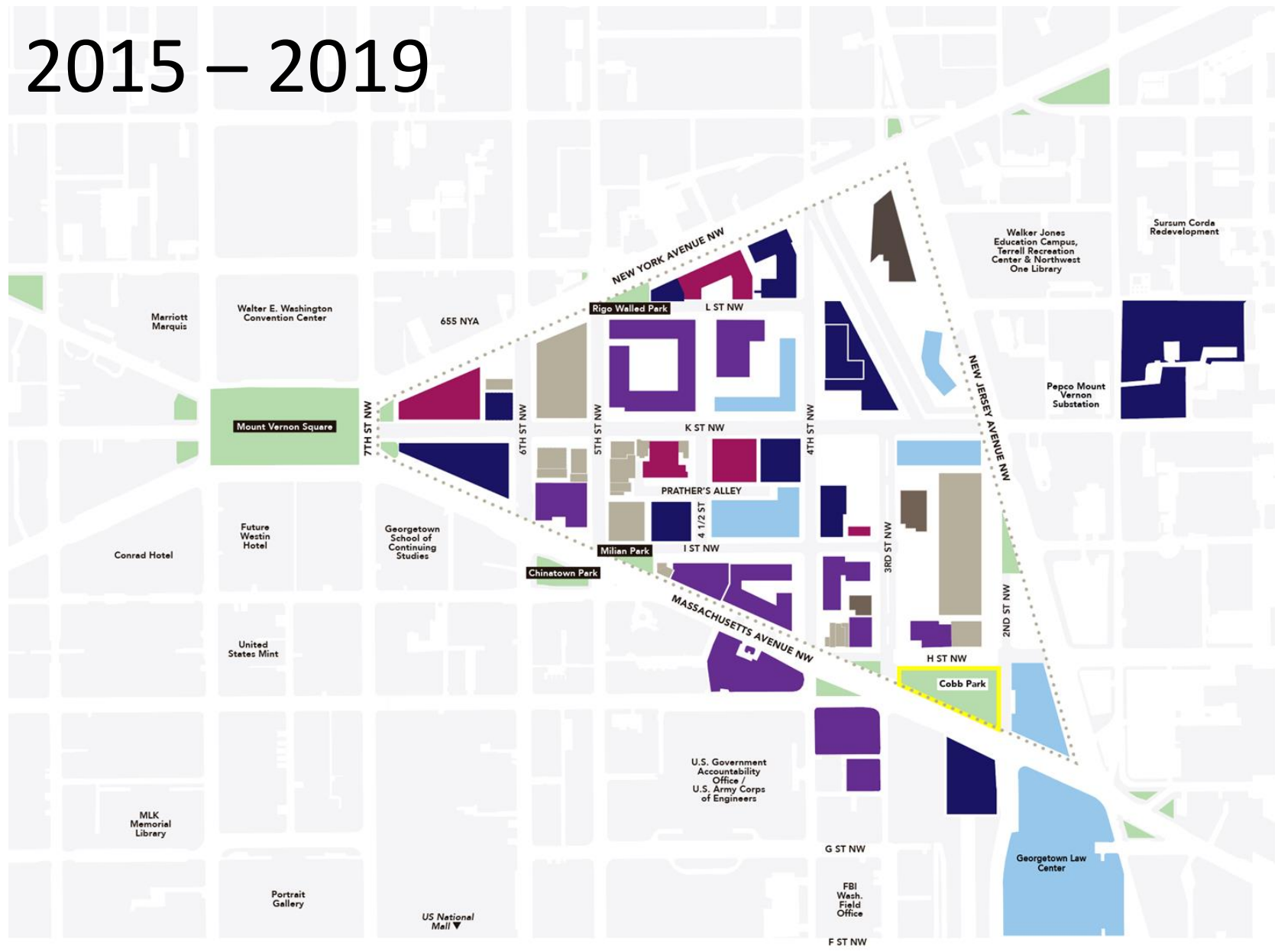
2004 – 2009



## Appendix A: Mount Vernon Triangle Development Progress

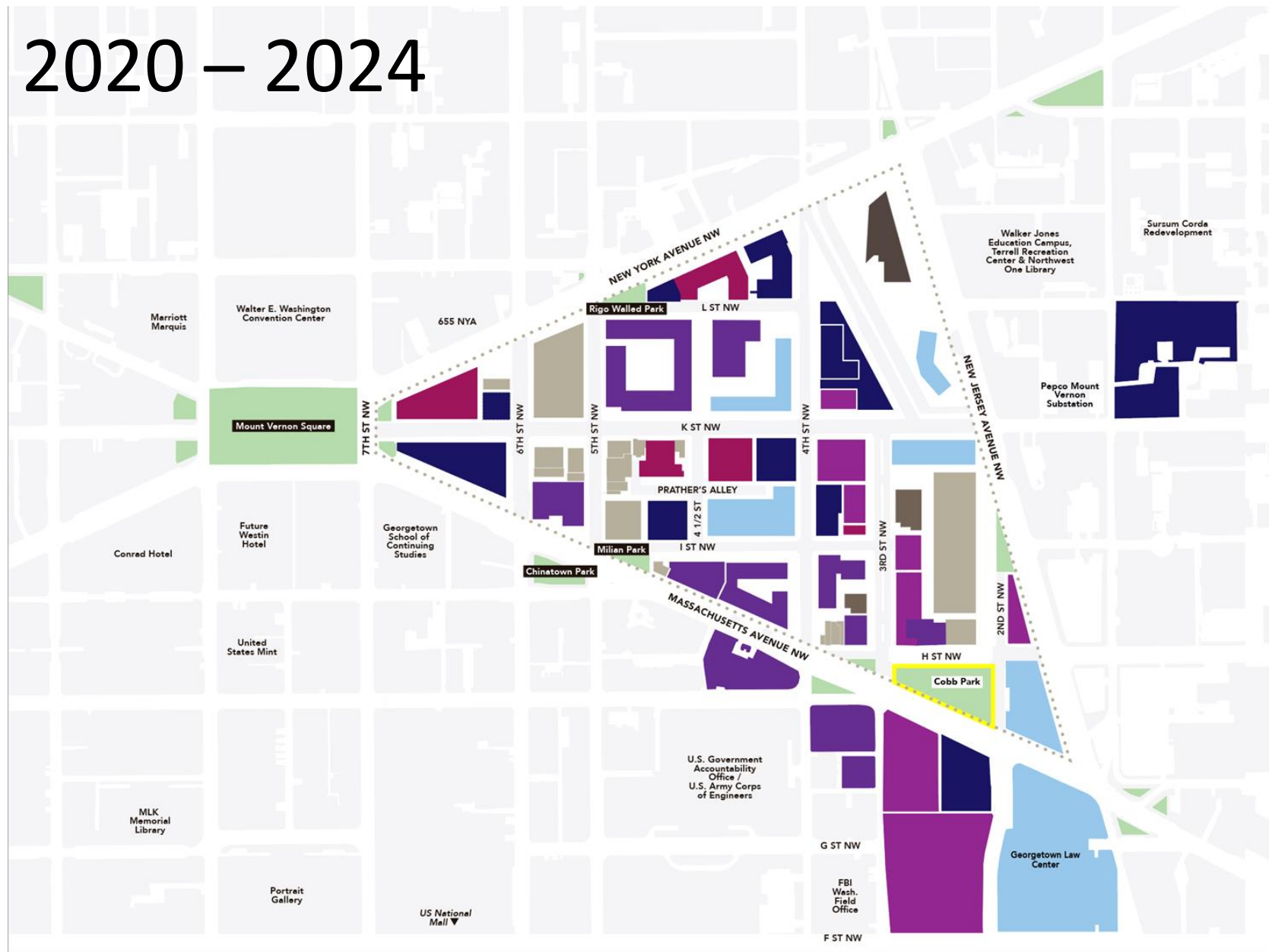


2015 – 2019



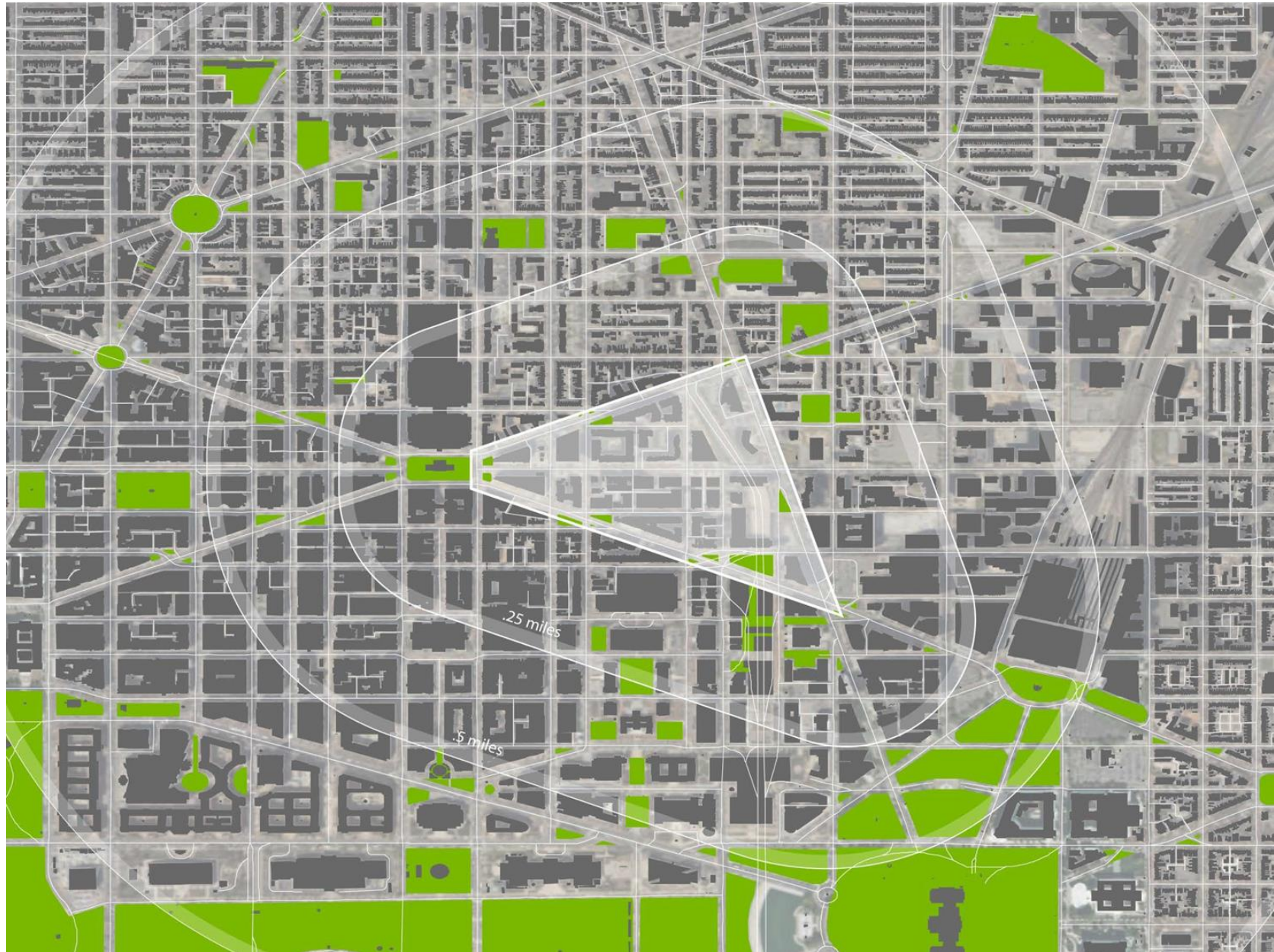


2020 – 2024



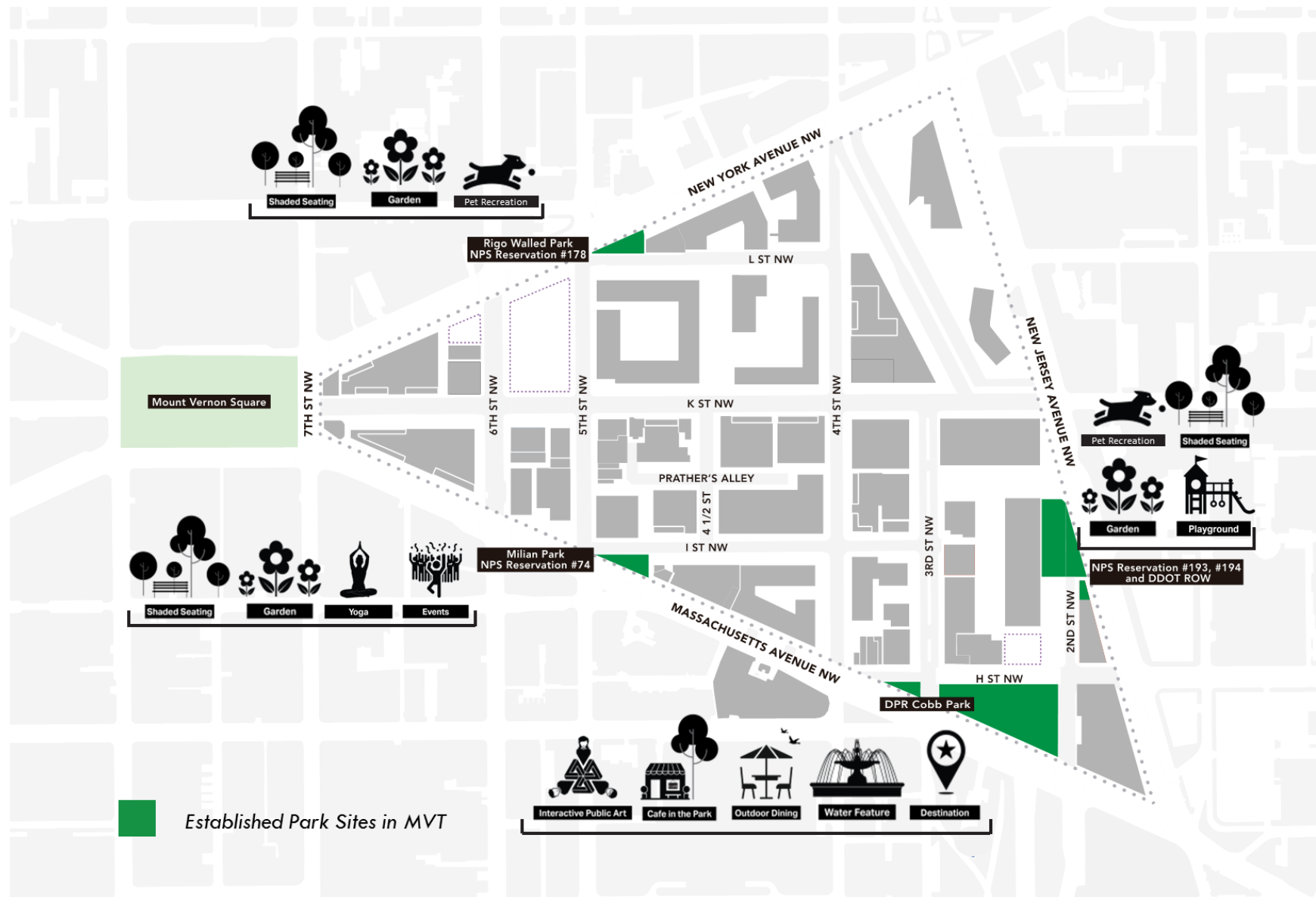
## Appendix B: Mount Vernon Triangle Open Space Deficit

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## Appendix C: Proposed Activity Map for Mount Vernon Triangle Parks & Open Space Network



## Appendix D: Cobb Park Today

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## Appendix E: Cobb Park “Re-Imagined”

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## Appendix F: Budget Request Back-Up & Methodology

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- To develop a predictive cost estimate range for this budget request, actual cost figures from other recent large-scale park improvement projects in the District were analyzed to determine an estimated cost per square foot figure for Cobb Park.
- In addition, based on discussions with National Park Service we also estimate \$250,000-\$500,000 being needed to bring lighting, landscape, and other upgrades to Milian Park.
- Using a range of base case, best case and worst case assumptions and scenarios, we estimate a budget range of approximately \$9.4-\$10.1 million to fund improvements at both Cobb Park and Milian Park. This figure *excludes* the \$650,000 that already has been allocated for the Phase 1 improvement of Cobb Park.
- In determining when and in what amounts to allocate this funding, our baseline anticipation is for an approximate 33-month timeline to complete the long-term Cobb Park project consisting of the following steps:
  1. Agency Planning
  2. Solicitation Process & Design Team Selection
  3. Concept Design<sup>5</sup>
  4. Schematic Design<sup>6</sup>
  5. Design Development<sup>7</sup>
  6. Construction Documents
  7. Permitting
  8. Construction
- We further contemplate requiring 1-2 years of NPS coordination and site design activities in support of upgrades at Milian Park.
- Through these assumptions we arrive at the following range for capital budget funding in support of this request:

### ***Range Estimate for FY 2022-2024 Capital Budget Request***

<b>Range Estimate</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>Total</b>
Low	\$285,531	\$5,104,035	\$3,997,441	\$9,387,008
High	\$301,001	\$5,617,021	\$4,214,018	\$10,132,040

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<sup>5</sup> Includes Commission on Fine Arts engagement

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Engagement with general contractor begins concurrent with this process to assist with pricing and procurement of long-lead items



## **Appendix G: Properties & Owner Organizations in Support of this Request (as of June 25, 2021)**

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### **Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners**

ANC 2C02 – Commissioner Elizabeth Miske  
ANC 6E04 – Commissioner Rachelle Nigro  
ANC 6E05 – Commissioner Patrick Parlej  
ANC 6E07 – Commissioner Kevin Rogers

### **Faith-Based Institutions**

Bible Way Church (est. 1927)  
Mount Carmel Baptist Church (est. 1876)  
Second Baptist Church (est. 1848)

### **Residential Properties**

455 Eye Street Apartments  
Capitol Crossing:  
Golden Rule Apartments  
Golden Rule Plaza Apartments  
L at City Visa Condominium Association  
Lydian 400K Apartments  
Lyric 440K Apartments  
Madrigal Lofts Condominium Association  
Meridian at Gallery Place Apartments  
Meridian at Mount Vernon Triangle I & II  
Apartments  
Plaza West Apartments  
Sonata Condominium Association  
The SeVerna Apartments  
The SeVerna on K Apartments

### **Commercial Office Properties**

111 Massachusetts Avenue  
455 Massachusetts Avenue

251 H Street  
601 Massachusetts Avenue  
655 K Street NW (Association of American  
Medical Colleges)  
1001 6th Street NW  
Capitol Crossing

### **Stand-Alone Retail**

City Vista  
Waffle Shop & Lord Baltimore Filling Station

### **Hotel**

AC Hotel by Marriot Convention Center

### **Property Owners, Managers & Developers**

AIPAC  
ASB Real Estate Investments  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Boston Properties  
Bush Construction  
Columbus Property Management  
Douglas Development Corporation  
EDENS  
Equity Residential  
Mission First Housing Group  
Paradigm Development Company  
Property Group Partners  
Quadrangle Development Corporation  
Quadrangle Management Company  
The Wilkes Company  
W.H.H. Trice & Co.

**See next page for a map of properties, organizations and ANC single-member districts  
in support of this request.**

## Appendix G: Properties & Owner Organizations in Support of this Request (as of June 25, 2021)

**Support Map (As of June 30, 2021)**

