

EASTERN MARKET METRO PARK



M A S T E R P L A N

Final Report

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Commissioned by:
Barracks Row Main Street

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A. Executive Summary

This Master Plan addresses a historic public square created by the L'Enfant Plan and located along one of the city's most monumental boulevards, Pennsylvania Avenue as it traverses from the east of the Anacostia River to the U.S. Capitol. The site, all publicly owned land along Pennsylvania Avenue SE, from 7th to 9th Streets and between the split D Streets, has never been developed as an attractive, inviting and well-designed park like the other major L'Enfant Plan squares in the District.

This Plan lays out a bold framework for transforming the site's neglected, decayed 1970's landscape into a vibrant, engaging, and functionally improved public space located in the heart of Capitol Hill. The site's role as an important transportation hub for bus and subway lines is significantly enhanced by improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, car-sharing and bus stop facilities supporting the public transit lines.

Each of the site's six parcels are developed with design concepts that optimize the public use of land and improve pedestrian safety, sustainability, and community engagement.

Parcel 1, the northeast corner, re-introduces the historic South Carolina Avenue axis through the site and provides a new unique children's playground for the community.

Parcels 2 and 5, the "Medians", create stormwater filtration gardens to treat and retain stormwater, and encourage pedestrian safety by limiting mid-block crossings.

Parcels 3 and 6, the "Bowties", capture and direct stormwater into planted bioswales while providing new shaded park seating on these parcels.

Parcel 4, the Metro Plaza, creates a vibrant public gathering space at the Metro Station entrance and provides a "once in a lifetime" potential opportunity to expand the historic Southeast Branch Public Library to meet today's DC Public Library's standards.

Created jointly by the Capitol Hill Community and the design team over an eleven month period, this Master Plan has been embraced by the Community, and provides the starting point for a City-sponsored project to implement the Community's goals for this neglected but important open space.



B. Goal & Objectives

1. Project Goal

The goal of this Master Plan study is to engage the Capitol Hill community in determining how to improve their two city blocks of public space located at the Eastern Market Metro Station, and to work with the community to develop these ideas into a blueprint for implementation.

2. Community Objectives

The community-based Task Force reviewed input from an extensive solicitation for community comments, suggestions, and ideas. The Task Force's consensus of the Community Objectives to guide the Master Plan work is as follows:

- To build relationships among Hill neighbors by creating public civic spaces that attract the community to gather and socialize.
- To provide a civic plaza at the Metro Station entrance to welcome, engage, and orient the ever increasing numbers of residents, visitors, commuters, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- To provide a secure active play area for the increasing number of young families in the neighborhood.
- To improve the functional aspects of the site as an active transportation hub, including pedestrian safety, bicycle facilities, and inter-modal transfer.
- To establish connections to the Hill's urban ecology by incorporating sustainability measures throughout the project.
- To engage the Southeast Branch DC Library with the site.
- To increase security in the area both at night and during the day.
- To plan for the long term maintenance of the site by planning an organizational structure and source of funding that will maintain the physical elements as well as address rodent control issues and public hygiene.
- To reinforce the original intent of the L'Enfant Plan by carrying the South Carolina Avenue axis through the site, enhancing Pennsylvania Avenue, and creating engaging civic spaces which mirror the spirit of the District's other L'Enfant Plan open spaces.

C. Study Process & Outreach

1. Study Methodology

The following outlines the Design Team's sequential steps in executing the study:

a. Initial Community Input

Before commencing with analysis and design work, two open public Community Meetings were held to solicit the community's goals, objectives, and ideas for the site's improvement. Additional comments came in through a 4 week open comment period following the Meetings via the project website and blog.

b. Data Gathering

The Design Team undertook an extensive inventory and analysis of the study area's existing conditions. The data gathered included, but was not limited to, the following:

- Community input regarding how the study area is currently used, its strengths and its weaknesses (see Initial Community Input below)
- A detailed certified topological & utility survey by AMT Engineering in 2008
- Eastern Market Metro Station section design documents indicating the below grade WMATA facilities within the study area.
- Capitol Hill and study area traffic data from DC Department of Transportation.
- Traffic counts conducted on site by Kittelson and Associates.
- The history of the study area, researched during a 2010 study.
- Current and proposed DC Zoning, DC Planning, DC Transportation, and Federal Agency planning efforts affecting the Study Area were reviewed.

c. Community Input & Data Analysis

The Community input and data gathered formed the basis for the Team's urban design analysis of the existing conditions, and was presented for comment to the Capitol Hill community in open public meetings, as well as to the Task Force. Diagrams of the existing conditions, presented at these meetings, were also posted on the project website for review and comment.

d. Response to Community & Regulatory Input

The Task Force reviewed all input and data, and provided guidance to the Design Team in the form of programmatic descriptions for each of two alternative concepts to be developed by the Team. While developing the two alternatives, the design team met with several DC and Federal Agencies for further input and guidance.

e. Two Alternative Concepts

The two alternative concepts, based on the programmatic briefs of the Task Force, were presented to the community in two open public meetings. An open Comment Period was held for the 8 weeks following the presentation to allow the community to provide comments, suggestions, and feedback. The Design Team organized all of the community input for review by the Task Force, which deliberated and selected portions of each of the two alternatives to be combined into a final Master Plan concept. In addition, the Task Force emphasized to the Design Team key issues to address while developing the final Master Plan.

f. Final Master Plan

The Design Team developed the final Master Plan concept and sought further guidance from several DC and Federal Agencies for incorporation into the plan. In addition, the Design Team developed a Budget Estimate of the cost of implementing the Master Plan and providing for long term maintenance of the study area.

g. Final Presentation

The Final Master Plan, including the budget estimate, was presented to the Community at two open public meetings, and posted on the Project's website.

2. Community Outreach & Participation

The Design Team built upon both initial and ongoing direct Community input to ensure that the ultimate master plan reflects the Community's goals and objectives.

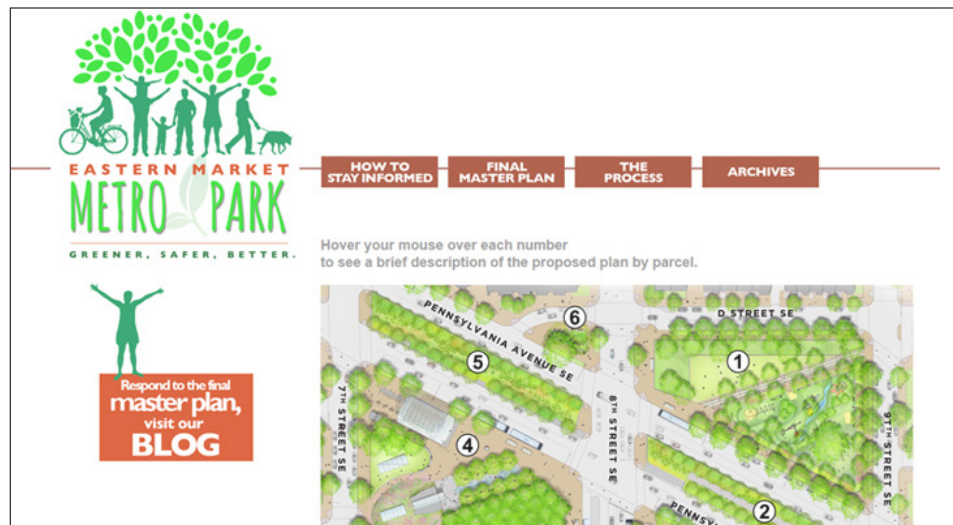
a. Media Communications with Community:

Print , Blog and Internet Media:

Throughout the course of the project, media coverage by the Hill Rag, the Voice of the Hill, the City Paper, Greater Greater Washington, several local blogs, local listservs and other local news outlets covered the project's progress. Upcoming community-wide meetings were announced in these media, as well as by the distribution of flyers in the immediate neighborhood and postings on the project website. Additionally, Capitol Hill community organizations such as the Capitol Hill Restoration Society and Barracks Row Main Street announced upcoming project meetings and provided newsletter coverage of the study's progress.

Dedicated Project Website:

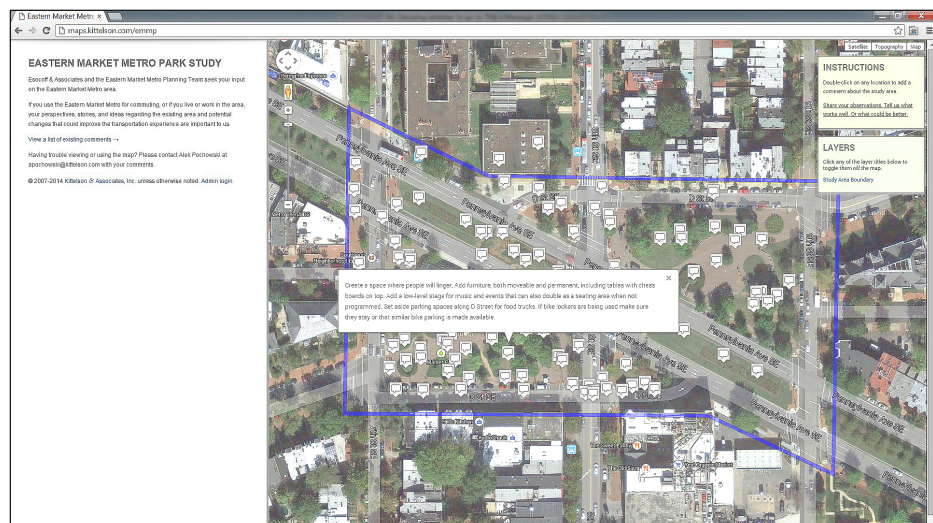
A project website (www.EasternMarketMetroPark.org) designed to facilitate communication and community outreach was created, maintained, and updated throughout the study period. Copies of all presentations and meeting minutes were posted to the website and public comments solicited through an interactive comment component and blog.



Screenshot of Project Website Homepage

Interactive Map:

This innovative tool allowed the public to make comments about specific locations within the overall study area. Visitors to the website could see at a glance where there were areas of concern, and could read the comments for each area and add their own feedback.



Screenshot of Interactive Online Public Comment Tool

b. Community Task Force:

An advisory Task Force was organized by Barracks Row Main Street to distill all issues and input received from the community and then provide guidance to the Design Team regarding program and design direction. The Task Force was comprised of individual representatives from Capitol Hill community groups, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B, and individuals representing the immediate surrounding residential neighborhoods (See Appendix III for list of Task Force Members). Task Force members were also available to serve as a conduit for any individual community member wishing to discuss issues of concern.

c. Participants in Study

During the study period, the design team was guided by over 850 individual community comments from community residents and local business owners. In addition to the Community Task Force, meetings were held with community group representatives, other stakeholders, and governmental groups as follows:

Other Stakeholders

The Friends of the Southeast Branch Library
Community Connections (a community mental health provider adjacent to Parcel 3)

Agencies Having Jurisdiction:

The Design Team met with staff members of the following DC agencies:

- DC Department of Transportation
- DC Office of Planning
- DC Historic Preservation Office
- DC Library
- DC Parks and Recreation
- DC Water
- DC Department of the Environment
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) including Department of Operations Services (Bus)

The Design Team met with staff members of the following federal agencies:

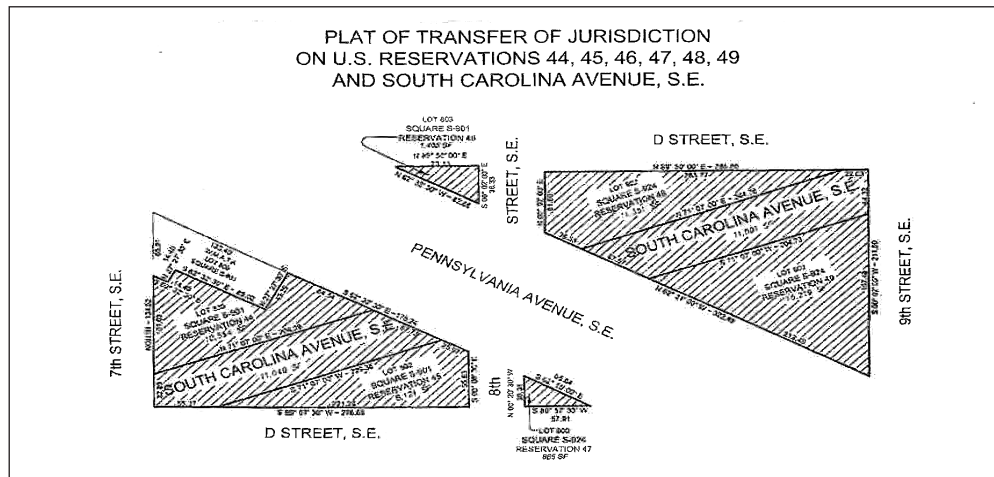
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fine Arts Commission
- National Capitol Planning Commission

D. Existing Conditions

1. Site Jurisdiction and Ownership

The project site is comprised of eight Reservations, originally created as National Park Service Reservations 44, 44A, 45, 46, 47, 47A, 48, and 49. In the mid 1960's, WMATA took control of a portion of Reservation 44 in order to construct and maintain the Eastern Market Metro Station entrance.

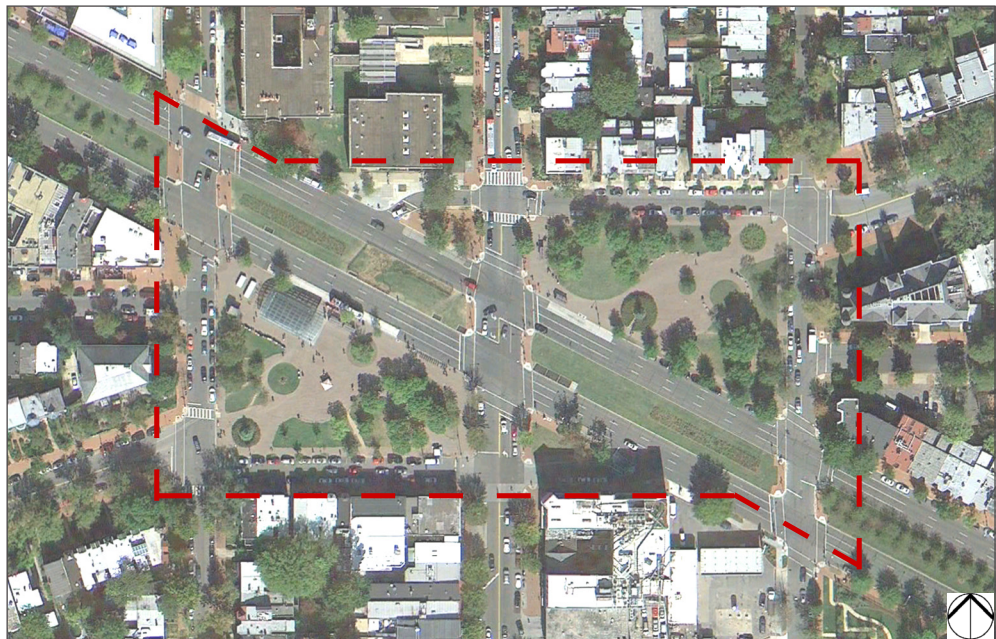
In 2010, jurisdiction of Reservations 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49 was transferred to the DC Government by the National Park Service. Ownership of these reservations was retained by the National Park Service. The jurisdiction of these reservations is currently held by the DC Department of General Services. Currently, Reservations 44A and 47A are both owned and under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service.



From Plat of Transfer dated 9/7/2010, D.C. Surveyor's Office

2. Site: Natural and Contextual Conditions

The project is located within the southeast quadrant of Washington DC, and within the Capitol Hill community. The project's study area is defined as the public right-of-ways of 7th, 9th, and D Streets, SE, as well as all land areas inscribed by those right-of-ways as indicated below.



Aerial photo of Study Area

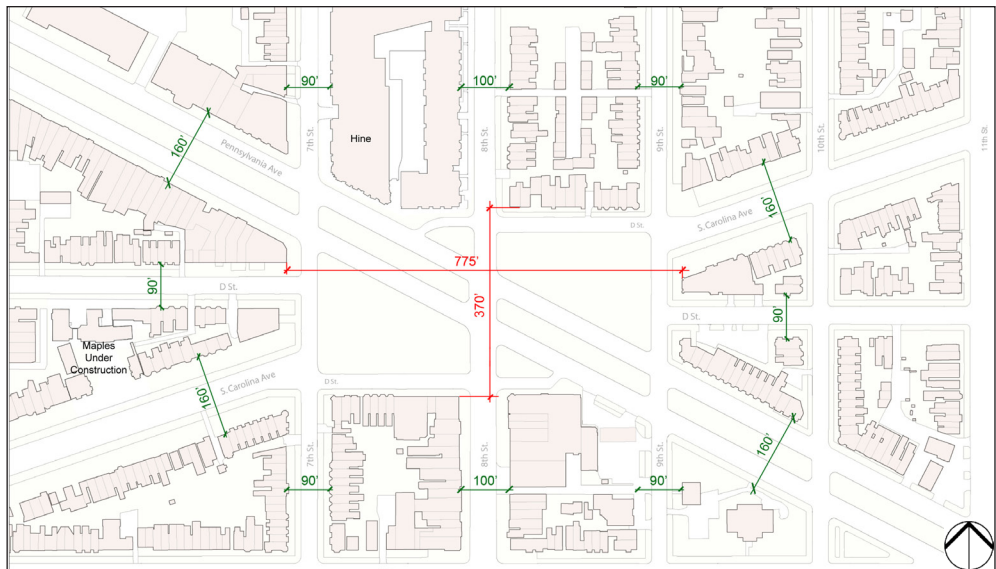
For the purpose of this study, the study area's six parcels are numbered sequentially starting at the northeast corner of the site and moving clockwise. These parcel numbers are used throughout this report for parcel identification:



Study Area with Parcel Numbers

Size & Scale of Study Area

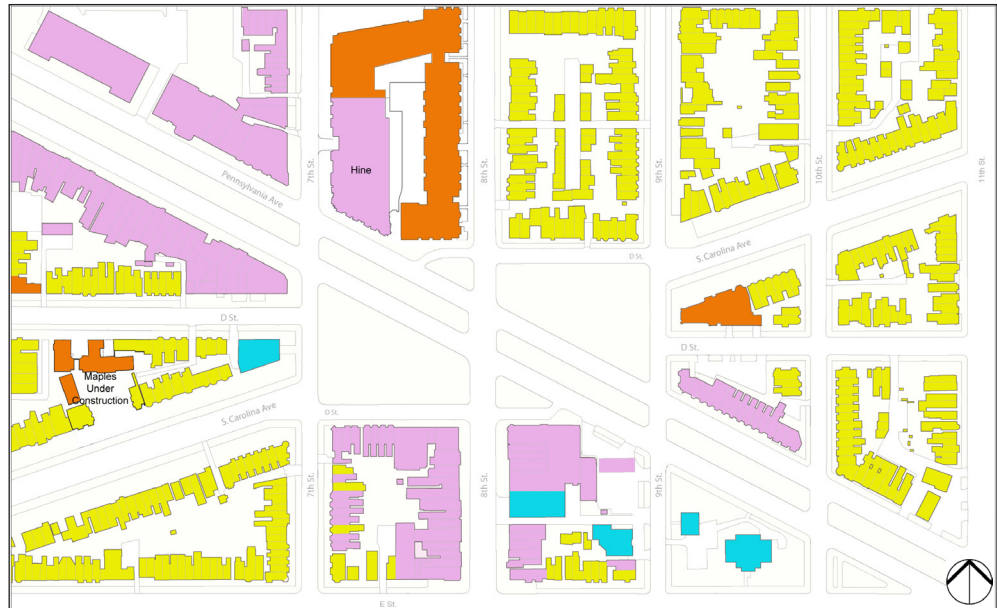
The size of the study area is approximately 7 acres – larger than the aggregation of four football fields. The heights of the surrounding buildings range from the one story CVS store at the west edge to the five story historic Haines Department Store structure at the southeast corner. The predominant building heights defining the square are two, three, and four story structures. This low height relative to the Square's plan dimensions has historically resulted in a lack of visual spatial definition to the open space.



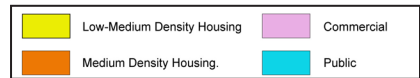
Site Dimensions

Land Use

The existing land uses surrounding the Square include residential, commercial, and public uses. The map below indicates the predominate land use of each lot. The Maples project on South Carolina Avenue that is currently under-construction is shown, as well as the proposed Hine project development in the 700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, 300 block of 7th Street, and 300 block of 8th Street.

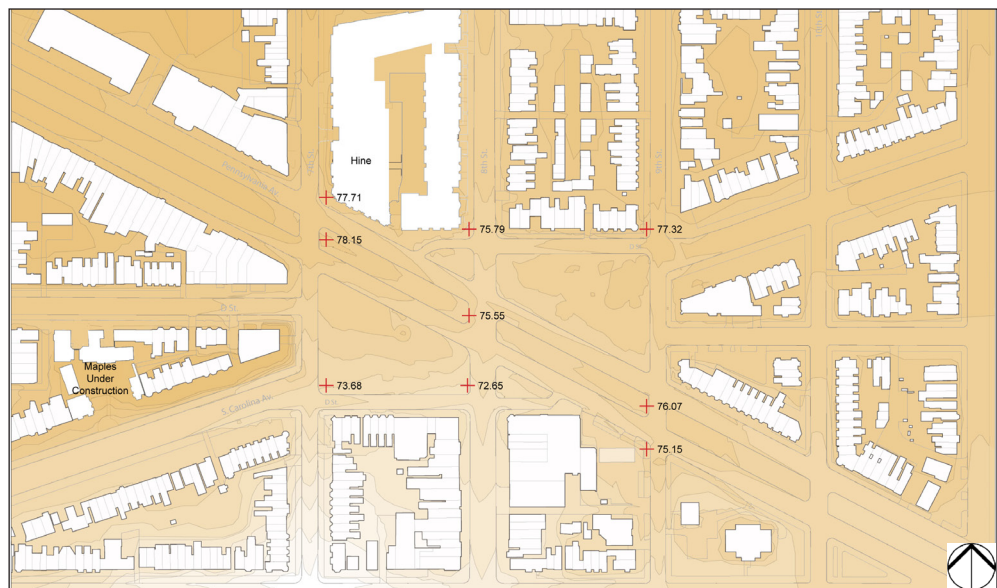


Land Use Map



Topography

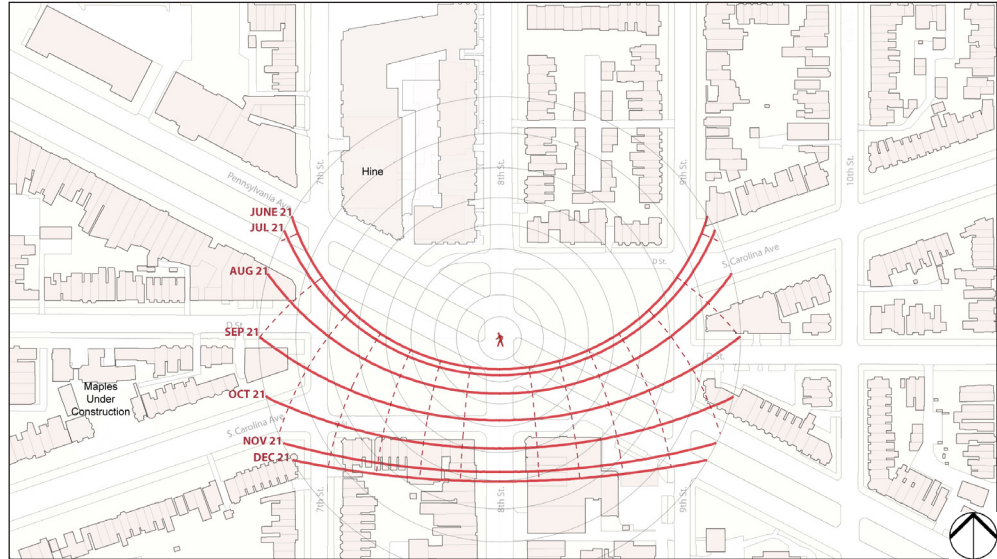
The topography of the study area slopes down from both the east and west borders to 8th Street in the center, and from the north edge to the south edge. This is consistent with the area's original natural slope to the Anacostia River.



Topography

Wind & Sun Exposure

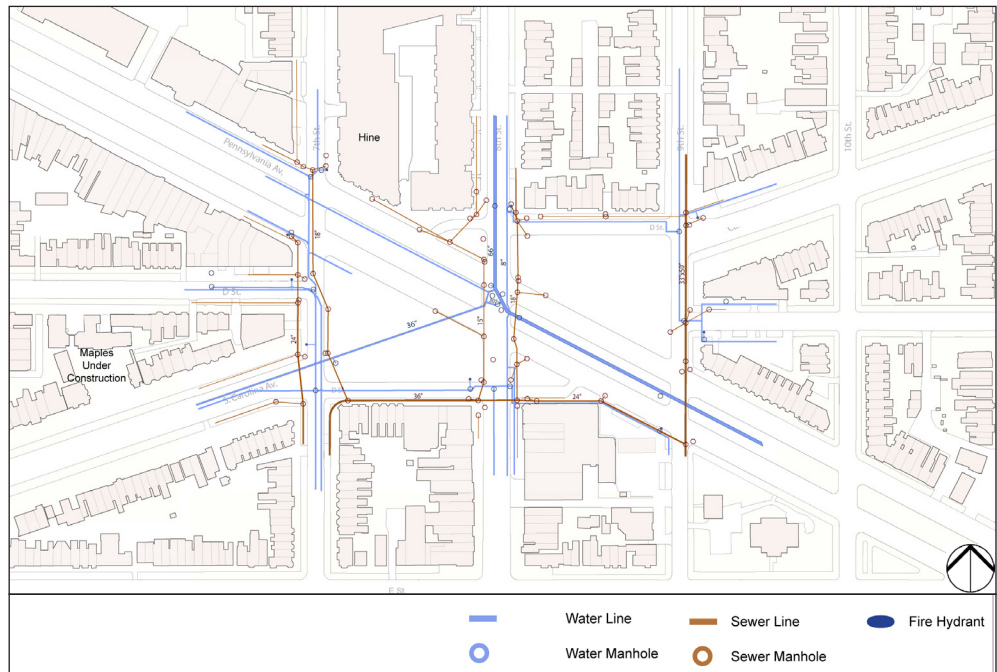
In the Washington DC metropolitan area, summer prevailing winds average 8.1 mph and are predominantly from the south. In the winter, the prevailing winds average 8.7 mph and are predominantly from the south and northwest. The study area, due to its current deficit of large shade trees and the relatively low height of surrounding buildings, experiences the full effects of solar radiation throughout the year. Diagrams below indicate the solar path across the area spanning from the longest day of the year to the shortest.



Site Sun Path

Utilities

In general, the study area's below grade utilities are typical of developed urban areas of the city. Of particular note is a large 66 inch diameter water main running south beneath the 8th Street right-of-way and turning at Pennsylvania Avenue to run eastward under the Parcel 2 median. Pertaining to the potential expansion and addition to the Southeast Branch DC Library, a 36 inch sewer line runs under the former South Carolina Avenue in Parcel 4, and there are smaller sewer and water lines running north-south beneath 7th Street.



Site Underground Utilities