



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember, Ward 3
Chair, Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Office: (202) 724-8062
Fax: (202) 724-8118
mcheh@dccouncil.us
www.marycheh.com

September 24, 2015

Brian T. Kenner, Deputy Mayor
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 317
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Deputy Mayor Kenner,

I am writing today about the Capitol Crossing development. As an initial matter, I am concerned about how this project has proceeded. In the normal course, a project of this scope would require significant permitting and oversight from multiple District agencies. From what I understand, this project has been handled as though it was a District project and thus did not have to go through the normal permitting process. For example, although the project entailed the removal of many trees from the public space, my office has been unable to identify permits for the removal of those trees. I would appreciate any information on how this project has progressed, whether it followed the normal permitting process, and—if it did not—why it did not.

More acutely, though, I am concerned about the ultimate traffic design on the northern boundary of the project. Previously, H Street provided an important connection across the city. Significant traffic—cars, busses, bikes—use that road to move from Downtown and Chinatown over to NoMa, Capitol Hill, and the H Street Corridor. Moreover, a great many drivers access I-395 at that point. I understand that, as part of the proposed reconstruction of the intersection of H Street NW, Massachusetts Avenue NW, and 3rd Street NW, three proposals were submitted to the Federal Highway Administration. Two of those proposals would have simply widened the entry point to 395 that currently splits off from 3rd Street NW. The third proposal (Alternative 3)—the proposal ultimately adopted—has an awkward left exit that drops down from the left lane of east-bound Massachusetts Avenue. I have attached diagrams of all three options for your reference.

The chosen alternative, while providing the greatest flexibility to the developer in square footage below grade, presents significant traffic obstacles. For example, the design will make H Street noncontiguous. This will mean that the significant traffic that uses that street will have to make sharp turns to stay on the road. It

will also mean that the only point of entry for I-395 will be from eastbound Massachusetts Avenue. Cars travelling westbound and traffic from H Street in both directions will now be routed down 3rd Street to the one-lane entrance to 395 at D Street NW. This already crowded intersection will now be forced to accommodate increased traffic, and that traffic will be routed down a street that will abut brand new residential development. Most troubling, though, the X2—the busiest bus line in the District—will almost certainly have to be rerouted because it simply cannot make the turns necessitated by the new configuration.

My second question, then, is why was this alternative—a design that seems to inure entirely to the benefit of the developer while producing significant impediments to the safe and effective flow of traffic to the likely detriment of the public—was chosen versus the other, less disruptive possibilities. I understand that there is still an opportunity to choose a more sensible alternative and would like your opinion about whether we shouldn't pursue that.

Regards,



Mary M. Cheh

cc: Jack Evans, Councilmember, Ward 2
Charles Allen, Councilmember, Ward 6
Leif Dormsjo, Director, District Department of Transportation

Alternative 1 - Portal on 3rd Street

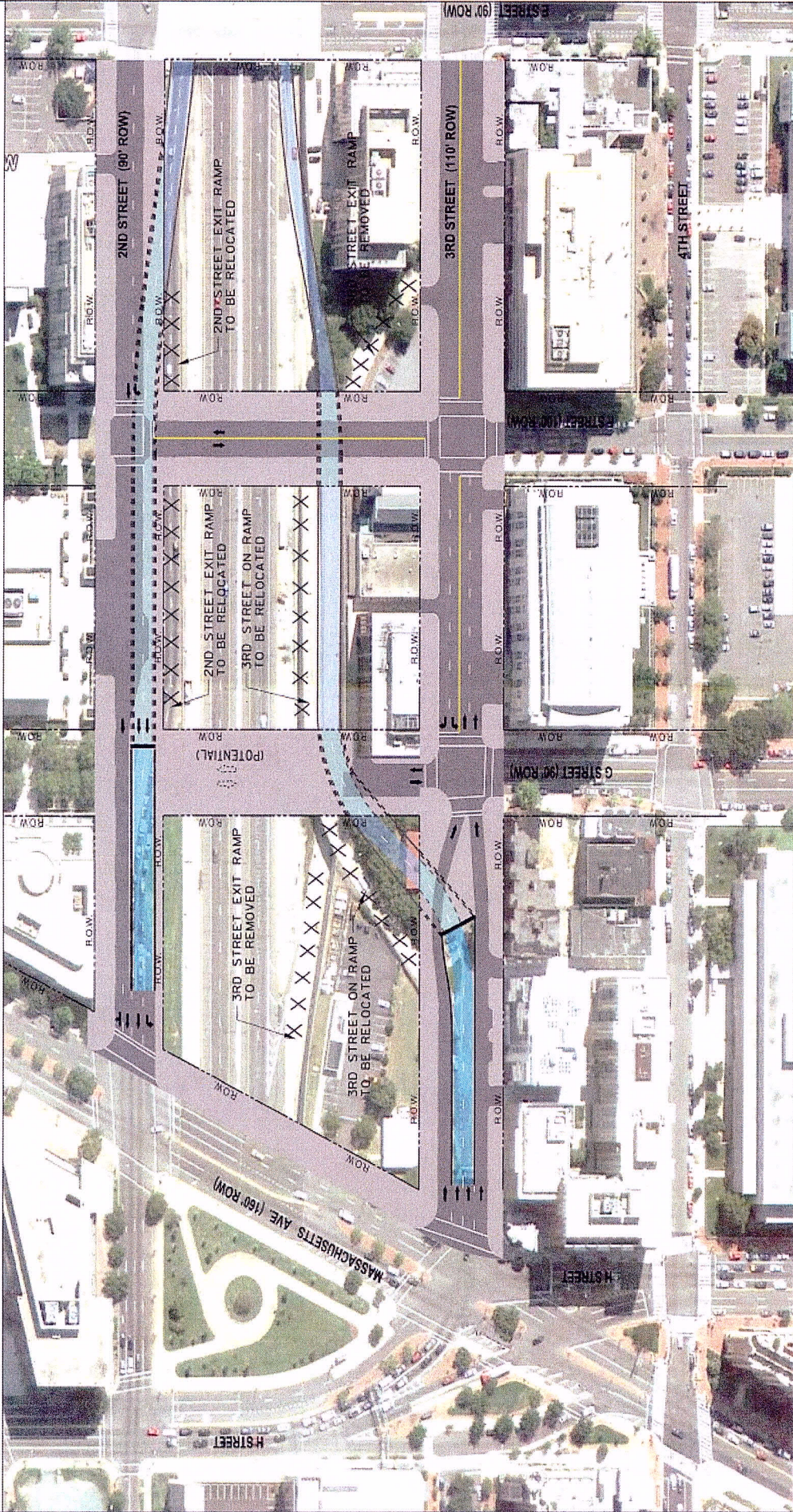


Figure 2.2

Alternative 2 - Portal East of 3rd Street

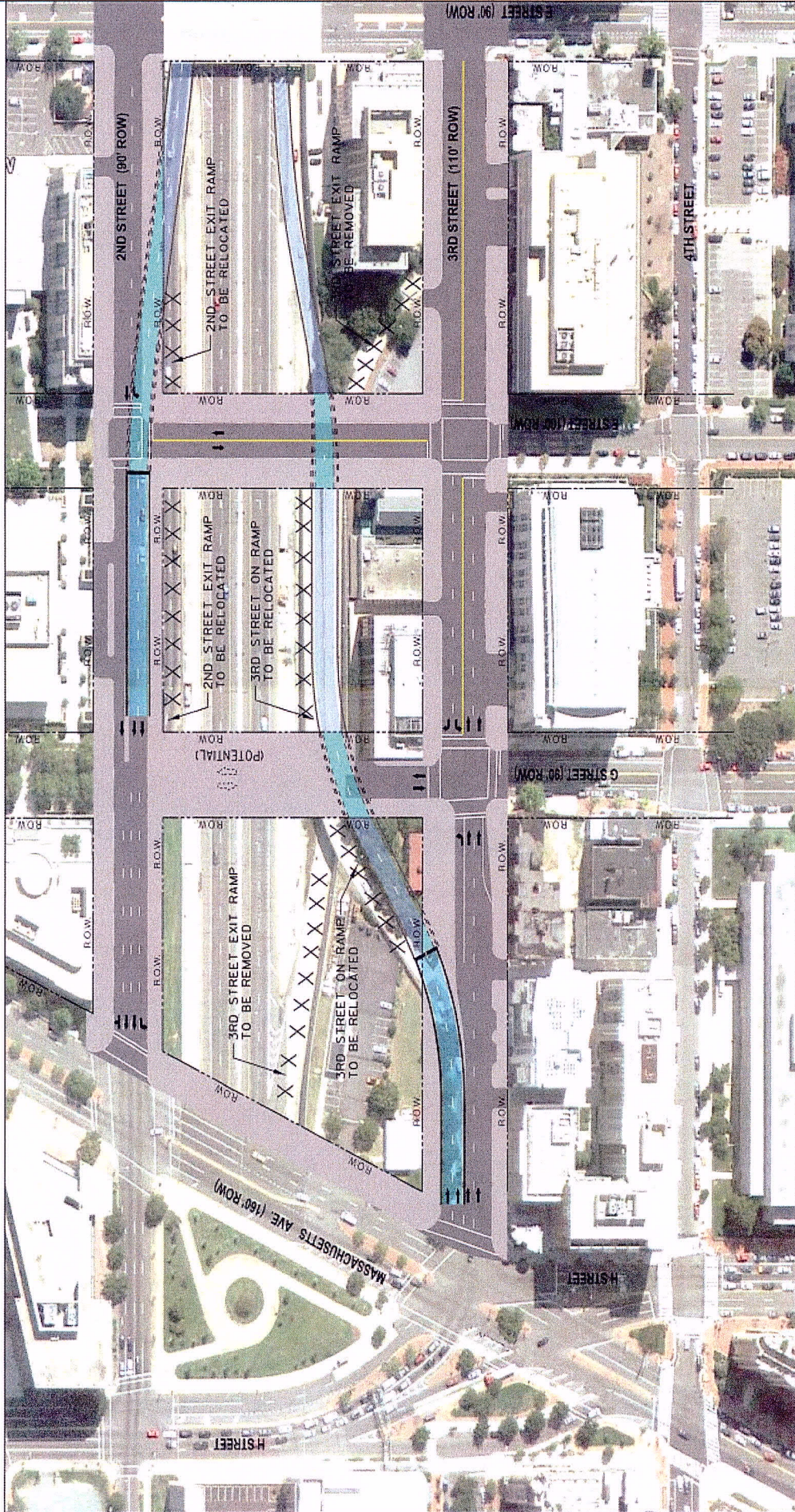


Figure 2-3

Alternative 3 - Portal On Massachusetts Avenue

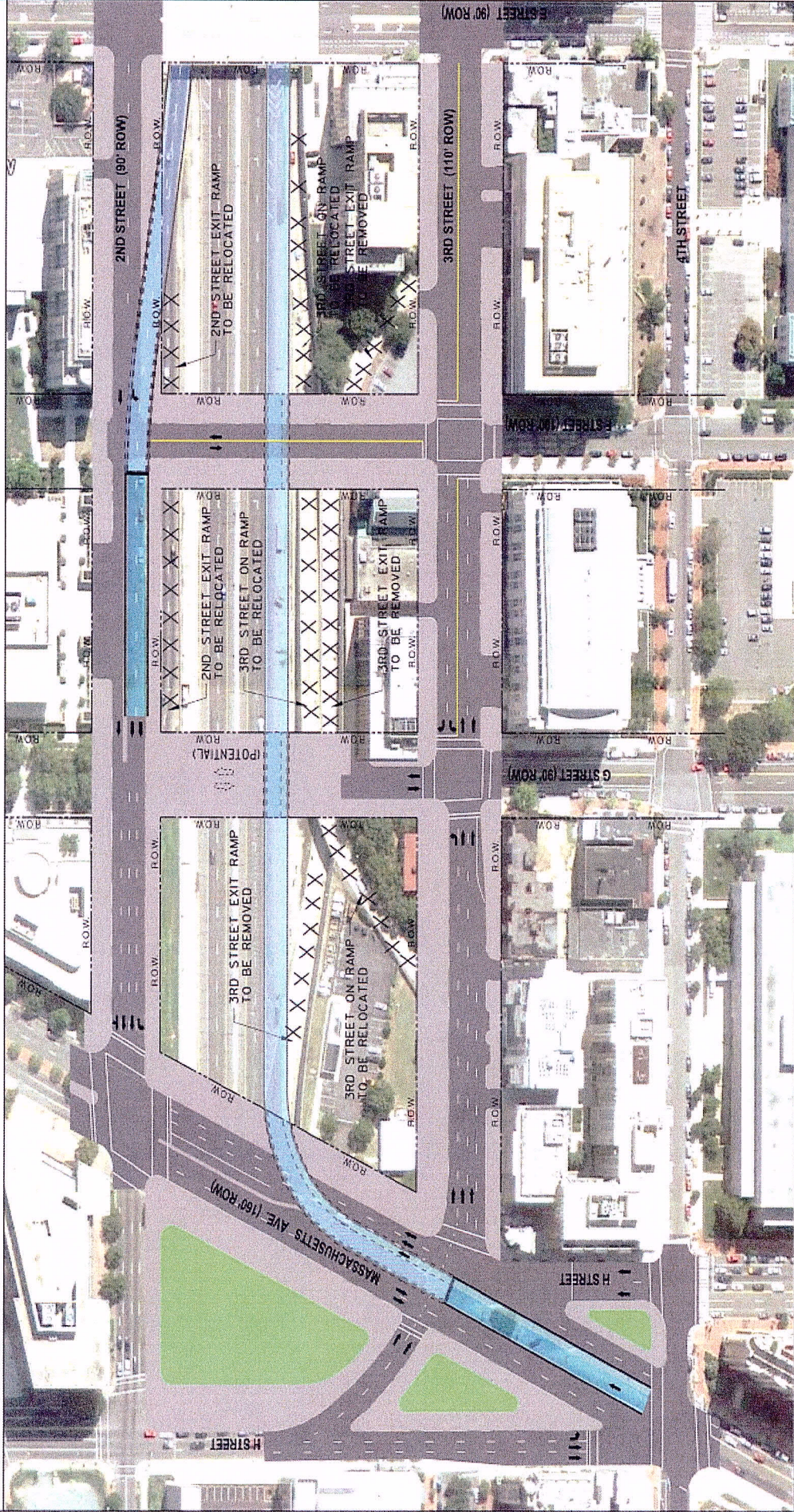


Figure 2-4