

# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

## Park View United Neighborhood Coalition (UNC) Streets Working Group DRAFT Report April 19, 2016

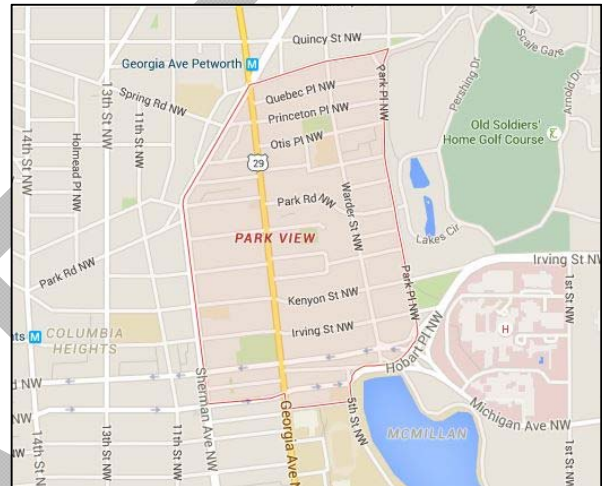
The Park View United Neighborhood Coalition (UNC) is a civic association located in the northern half of the Park View neighborhood of Washington, DC, which has served the Park View community since 2003. In 2015, the UNC launched the Park View Streets Working Group, a collaborative effort by neighbors to improve the streets of Park View. The goals of the group are to improve pedestrian, auto, and bicycle safety, increase wheelchair and stroller access to sidewalks, ensure adequate maintenance, and improve the general appearance, cohesiveness, and rational design of Park View and surrounding areas, while ensuring adequate street parking and avoiding traffic congestion. In this draft report, we broadly categorize these goals under the frameworks of safety, accessibility, maintenance, and liveability.

Much of Park View was developed without the benefit of residential zoning rules requiring adequate space for sidewalks and streets. As a result, many sidewalks throughout the neighborhood are potentially too narrow to allow access by wheelchairs and strollers, and lack space for tree boxes, creating large stretches lacking in shade. These narrow sidewalks create a large

“tree desert” in the center of our neighborhood, stretching south from Otis Place to Kenyon Street. In addition, Park View’s residential streets are often utilized by through traffic that may be unfamiliar with the one-way streets and stop signs in the neighborhood or travel at inappropriate speeds.

This report highlights these and other issues neighbors have identified for streets throughout the neighborhood, and identify potential solutions. In compiling the report, the Streets Working Group has met monthly at publicly announced sessions, conducted a neighborhood walk through, and gathered input from the neighborhood school Parent’s group, Parents and Teachers United for Bruce-Monroe Elementary at Park View, on safety issues near the school. A draft of this report was

presented to the full UNC membership at the April 6, 2016 UNC meeting, and feedback from that meeting has been incorporated into this version of the report.



The Streets Working Group aims to improve the Park View neighborhood of NW Washington DC



Many streets in Park View lack tree boxes, creating a “tree desert” in the center of our neighborhood

# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

The Streets Working Groups hopes to use the report to start a conversation with city officials. We recognize that street changes can have multiple impacts on the community, both positive and negative, and expect to work with city officials to gather community input as appropriate prior to implementing solutions.

We are interested in working with The Mayor's Office, the DC Council, the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT), ANC1A, and other neighborhood groups (including the Luray-Warder Neighborhood Association, Pleasant Plains Civic Association, Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force, and BMPV PTU) to further develop consensus on a path forward for some of the more challenging issues presented in this report. We believe that this proposal can build upon work already being carried out by these agencies and organizations, including pedestrian safety efforts undertaken by Mayor Muriel Bowser as part of her Vision Zero Action Plan, DDOT's Crosstown Multimodal Transportation Study and other regional planning, ongoing efforts by ANC 1A, Casey Trees, the Luray-Warder Neighborhood Association, and other groups to increase the number of trees in the neighborhood.

We would also like DDOT or another city agency to commission a traffic and liveability study specifically for Park View that would further explore problems and solutions for our neighborhood streets. We are aware that DDOT is in the midst of planning a Crosstown Multimodal Transportation Study that includes Park Place and southern part of Park View, and may in the future initiate a study centered in Petworth that includes the northern part of Park View. While such studies may address some of the issues identified in this report, their larger regional focus means they may be poorly suited to addressing some of the smaller-scale issues distinct to Park View. We therefore believe a smaller study focused on our neighborhood would be appropriate.



An interactive map of the issues identified in this report is available at <http://bit.ly/1ScprGd>.

To facilitate implementation of the ideas in this report, an appendix has been added that organizes suggestions into three categories: 1) Solutions requiring minimal planning and community input, 2) Solutions requiring moderate planning and community input, and 3) Solutions requiring high levels of planning and community input.

## 1. Park Place

Improving safety, accessibility, and liveability along Park Place was the number one priority identified by Park View residents participating



Improving conditions on Park Pl was the highest priority identified by the Streets Working Group.

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# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

in the Streets Working Group. Park Place is a one-way street running southbound along the length of Park View. Park Place and Warder Street, which runs northbound form the two central streets dominating the neighborhood of Park View.

Park Place occupies two lanes from Rock Creek Church Road down to Kenyon Street, where it becomes three lanes. As currently designed, this busy street cuts Park View off from the Soldier's Home, the park-like property for which our community was originally named.

There are not stop lights along Park Place as it traverses Park View, and traffic tends to be light. Through-traffic tends to take advantage of this long stretch of stoplight-free road to speed, particularly over the down-hill sloping section beginning at Manor Pl. While a police cruiser is regularly stationed in this area to ticket speeders, cars continue to move dangerously fast on this road.

A one-way bike lane on the west side of Park Place provides some safety for bicycles, and a second one-way bicycle lane along Warder currently accommodates north-bound cyclists. The bike lane is narrow and unprotected, however, and both speeding cars and opening car doors continue to pose a hazard to bicycles, particularly cyclists who speed down the sloping section of the road.

Park Place is also lacking in adequate pedestrian options. This represents a significant lost opportunity for the Park View, which is largely disconnected from the "park" that inspired its name. Further north, Petworth residents enjoy a broad, tree-lined sidewalk immediately abutting the Soldier's Home along Rock Creek Church Road. This sidewalk is used regularly by pedestrians, joggers, and dog walkers, and is an excellent recreational resource for the community.

By contrast, there is no sidewalk along the eastern side of Park Place, meaning there is no way to view the Soldier's Home without looking across traffic. In addition, the sidewalk on the west side of the Park Place is potentially too narrow to accommodate tree boxes or wheelchairs. Pedestrians, joggers and dog walkers therefore tend to avoid this street. A sidewalk of adequate width on either or both sides of Park Place would create excellent opportunities for recreation, allowing for a continuous path around the Soldier's Home through Park View and Petworth, and improving the cohesiveness and general appearance of the neighborhood.

Many of these problems could be addressed if Park Place were narrowed to a single lane. Options for improvements using the additional space created by removal of a lane could include:

- A sidewalk and tree boxes on the east side of Park Place, abutting the Soldier's home.
- Tree boxes and a wider sidewalk on the west side of Park Place.
- Creating a two-way or protected bike lane. Note: if a two-way bike lane were added, the existing bike lane on Warder Street could be moved, allowing the sidewalks to be expanded along Warder as well.



# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

In addition, sections of Park Place lack adequate signage. See *infra* “Signage Needed” for more details.

## 2. Warder around the Park View School and Park.

The second major street anchoring Park View is Warder Street, a one-way street running northbound through the heart of the neighborhood. Safety, accessibility, and liveability are also major concerns along this street, particularly the area surrounding the Park View school building (home of Bruce Monroe Elementary at Park View), and Park View Recreation Center, which form the heart of our community.

Warder Street has narrow sidewalks and lacks tree boxes on one or both sides of the street for much of its length. Widening these sidewalks and installing tree boxes on both sides of the street would enhance accessibility and liveability.

Possible solutions include:

- Moving the northbound one-way bicycle lane to Park Road; thereby allowing for wider sidewalks and tree boxes along Warder.

The section of the 600 block of Otis Pl NW, which runs one-way from east to west between the school and the recreation center, is a high-risk area for pedestrians, particularly children entering and leaving the recreation center and surrounding grounds. While Otis Pl is closed off with cones during the school day, it is open to traffic at other times, and risk is particularly high the after school/early evening period when children using the recreation center and surrounding grounds are not always closely supervised. This section of Otis is also potentially unnecessarily wide to accommodate one-way traffic, encouraging cars to speed. In addition, the sidewalks on this part of the block are potentially too narrow for wheel chairs and strollers, and much of the street currently lacks tree boxes. (Note: tree boxes were recently added on the south side of Otis Place abutting the school, by moving the stretch of grass immediately next to the school building, a change not pictured here).

Possible solutions include:

- Narrowing the street along the portion of Otis place between the recreation center and the school to discourage speeding while simultaneously creating more space for wheel chairs and tree boxes.



Warder St is in the heart of Park View



Safety on Otis Place is a priority due to the number of children crossing this street to reach the park.

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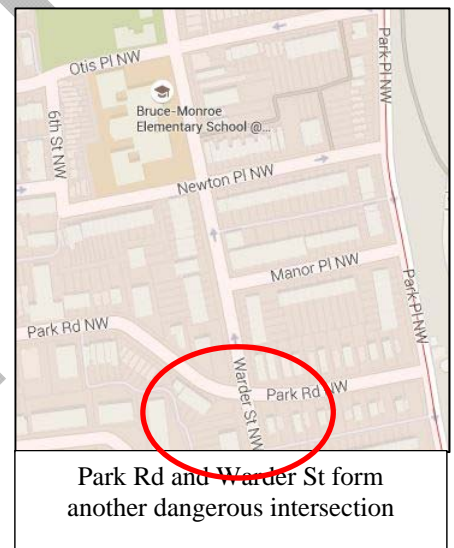
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- Closing off this section of Otis Place and combining the school and recreation center into one property, possibly a larger recreation center or new wing on school building to provide indoor recreation space for the school and community (a significant change requiring appropriate study and further community input).
- Adding speed bumps, rumble strips, a slightly raised crosswalk, additional signage, or other options to mitigate speeding on Otis Place.

Immediately south of the school and recreation center is another dangerous intersection where Park Road, a two-way east-west street, enters Warder Street. (Park Road is distinct from Park Place, a one-way southbound street located to the east of Warder Street). Park Road approaches Warder here at a sharp angle, creating a blind spot where drivers headed westbound have difficulty seeing eastbound traffic, and vice versa. Through traffic also sometimes turns southbound the wrong way on Warder street at this intersection, neglecting the one-way signs posted here.

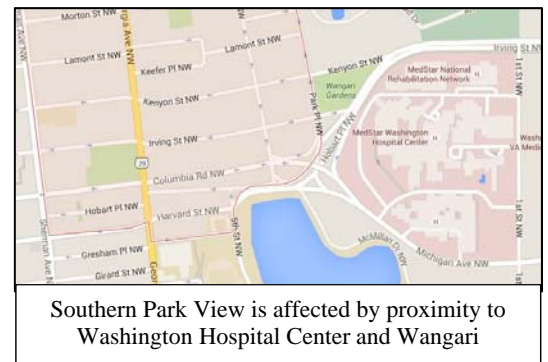
Possible solutions include:

- Adding speed bumps, rumble strips, or other mitigation along Park Road
- Converting Park Road into a one-way street (a significant change requiring appropriate study and community input)
- Installing “wrong way” signs on both sides of Warder immediately south of Park Road (see also *infra* “Signage Needed”)



### 3. Washington Hospital Center and Wangari Gardens

Southern Park View is greatly affected by its proximity to the Washington Hospital Center and Wangari Gardens. This part of the neighborhood sees a large amount of east-west through traffic in the form of cars traveling off of Irving Street and Michigan Avenue and entering the neighborhood, often in transit to busy Columbia Heights. Pedestrian, bicycle, and auto traffic are all likely to increase in this area should planned developments at McMillan Reservoir, the Soldier's Home, and Howard University move forward, as this will be the primary point of access between Park View and these surrounding areas. Safety, accessibility, and liveability are all important concerns in this part of the neighborhood, and solutions must take into account a likely traffic changes as the region changes. We hope that many of the issues identified in this report for this section of the neighborhood will be addressed as part of the DDOT Crosstown Multimodal Transportation Study.



# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

Cars coming at high speeds off Irving Street often enter Park View moving one-way westbound along the 400 block of Kenyon Street. In this section, Kenyon quickly narrows from three lanes to two, then one. The two-lane section of Kenyon has narrow sidewalks lacking in tree boxes. Cars often continue to speed in this two-lane section. Further west, on the 500 block of Kenyon, the street narrows to one lane and trees line both sides, creating a more welcoming residential atmosphere (although speeding problems persist on this block as well).



Cars often speed entering the two-lane section of the 400 block of Irving St.

One solution would be to reduce the number of lanes sooner (2 lanes on the portion of the 400 block of Kenyon immediately north of Wangari gardens, one lane on the residential portion of the 400 block of Kenyon). With fewer lanes for cars, a bike lane could be added, or the sidewalks could be widened to accommodate wheelchair access and tree boxes.

In addition, modifying the portion of Kenyon Street that runs beside the Soldier's Home would have several benefits to Park View in terms of liveability. First, this broad stretch of grass could easily accommodate a sidewalk or walking/jogging path, allowing for additional recreational opportunities around the Soldier's Home and offering pedestrian access between Park View and other developing neighborhoods on the opposite side of the Washington Hospital Center. (If Park Place were also modified to allow for sidewalk, this could be connected to create a much longer path circling much of the Soldier's Home).



A place-making "Welcome to Park View" sign would fit north of Kenyon

The grassy area to the north of Kenyon street would also be a good location for a place-making "Welcome to Park View" sign to help enhance the impression of this area as a residential, neighborhood space for drivers entering the neighborhood.

The 400 block of Irving Street (the part of Irving immediately south of Wangari gardens) is also potentially unnecessarily wide, encouraging cars to speed leaving the neighborhood. In addition, as Irving curves at the hospital, there is a crosswalk that lacks a protected light. This intersection is confusing for both pedestrians and cars: based on the existing traffic lights, there is always a set of cars with a green light to drive across the crosswalk, meaning there is no protected time for pedestrians to cross, and cars assume that they always have the right-of-way at this intersection, failing to yield when a pedestrian is in the crosswalk. A protected pedestrian crossing signal and/or additional signage at this intersection would mitigate this problem.





# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

The stretch of Park Place that begins at Kenyon Street NW (3120 Park Pl) and runs south to Michigan Avenue is potentially unnecessarily wide, encouraging speeding in the area around Wangari gardens. The sidewalk on the west side of Park Place is also potentially too narrow to accommodate street trees or wheelchair access. Removing a lane of traffic could potentially improve safety and liveability for this stretch of Park Place.



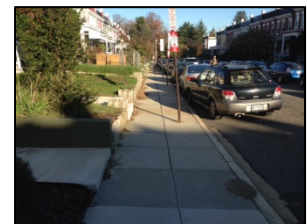
The Michigan Avenue overpass area entering Park View is currently not very accessible to pedestrians seeking to reach Children's Hospital from the north. In the future, this will also be the point of access for pedestrians and cyclists seeking to travel from Park View to the shops and



recreational spaces planned for the McMillan Reservoir development. We hope that solutions to this problem will be identified during the DDOT Crosstown Multimodal Transportation Study.

## 4. Newton and Luray

The 400 blocks of Luray Pl NW and 400 Newton Pl NW are both potentially unnecessarily wide to accommodate one-way traffic flow on these streets, encouraging cars to speed and double-park on these blocks. The sidewalks on both streets are also potentially too narrow to accommodate tree boxes and wheel chair/stroller access. All these issues could be solved by re-sizing the streets and sidewalks to comport with current DC regulations regarding appropriate minimum street widths.



The Streets Working Group believes that these streets could be narrowed without affecting parking or traffic congestion. Appendix 2 includes an assessment of Luray Place, created by Streets Working Group member Adam Chamy using data on the street and sidewalk width from [opendata.dc.gov](https://opendata.dc.gov) and DC's current required street width minimums.<sup>1</sup> It shows that narrowing the street and expanding the sidewalks would bring the street into closer alignment with current regulations regarding minimum street width. We would like DDOT to undertake a study of these streets confirm whether such re-sizing would be appropriate, and what, if any, impact such changes would have on parking and traffic.

<sup>1</sup> Public Realm Design Manual: A Summary of District of Columbia Regulations and Specifications for the Design of Public Space Elements. DC Department of Transportation, 2011.

# United Neighborhood Coalition

3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

## 5. Increasing green spaces

In addition to the major streets changes outlined above, the Streets Working group identified many opportunities to increase trees and green space in Park View without dramatically altering the configuration of existing streets. These could increase tree cover in our shade-starved neighborhood, and would also improve rainwater retention. This could help reduce flooding in Bloomingdale, as much of Park View is part of the Bloomingdale watershed.

Green space could be increased by creating bio-retention curb-outs, as well as more traditional tree boxes.

### A. Bio-retention curb-outs

Several streets in Park View are not wide enough to allow for expansion of the sidewalks to allow space for tree boxes. Bio-retention curb-outs offer one creative solution to this problem.



Bio-retention curb-outs have been used in other areas for green space and rainwater retention



A location for a curb-out on the 3500 block of Warder St.

One of the best locations for a bio-retention curb-out is the 3500 block of Warder Street. Two crosswalks on this block currently have no parking between them. This would be a prime spot for a bio-retention area, as adding a curb-out in this section of the street would not reduce existing street parking. Locating such curb-outs here, south of the School, would also help discourage speeding along this stretch of Warder Street.

The 400 block of Lamont Street lacks both sidewalk tree boxes and front yards, making it one of the worst blocks in Park View in terms of tree cover and green space. The street is also potentially too narrow to easily expand the sidewalks. Bio-retention bump-outs could help to solve this problem by providing space for trees. Locations for this could include an area in front of the corner store and spaces between driveways on the north side of the street. These spaces between driveways are also currently too small to accommodate parked cars, meaning parking would not be lost if bump-outs

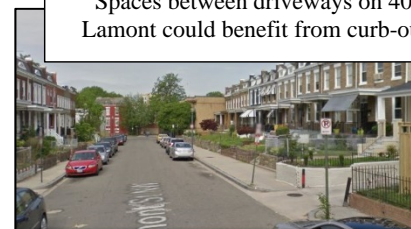
were added here.



Spaces between driveways on 400 Lamont could benefit from curb-outs

### B. Easy spaces for new tree boxes without widening existing sidewalks

A small number of sidewalks in the area are large enough to





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accommodate tree boxes. These include:

- i. A portion of the north side of the 500 block of Lamont Street NW

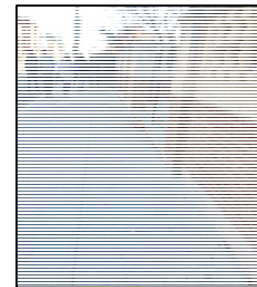
- ii. 507 Luray place NW. (Note: this portion of the sidewalk appears to have been recently repaired with substandard concrete that immediately began to pit and flake. If a replacement of the substandard material is planned, tree boxes could be installed at this time.



- iii. The 700 block of Rock Creek Church Road (also recently re-paved with substandard concrete). This side of Rock Creek Church Road also historically hosted tree boxes.

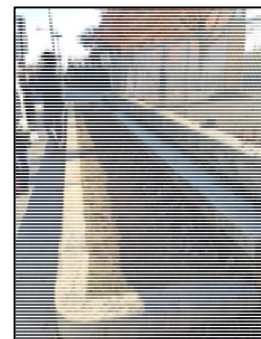


- iv. The sidewalk immediately in front of the main entrance to the Park View school building is wide enough for a small section of tree boxes.



## *C. Opening space for trees around the Park View School*

Several green spaces abutting the Park View school building are currently not suitable for trees, either because they are too close to the building, or because they attract foot traffic that prevents plantings from surviving. For example, two existing flower boxes along Warder have been unsuccessfully planted repeatedly with small trees and hardy plants. Plants do not survive in these boxes because children, like to climb and sit on the low walls of the school. The sidewalk along this entire portion of Warder could be moved closer to the wall of the school, creating new tree boxes between the street and sidewalk could allow space for trees less likely to be trampled by children. Similar sidewalk adjustments could be made by



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moving additional garden beds and grass strips abutting the school building along Newton.

The Streets Working Group has made initial inquiries with BMPV officials, who are open to the idea of reconfiguring green space around the school to create more space for trees. The school recently participated in similar change along Otis Place, which created tree boxes without increasing the overall distance between the school and the curb to the street.

## 6. ADA access to sidewalks via wheelchair ramps

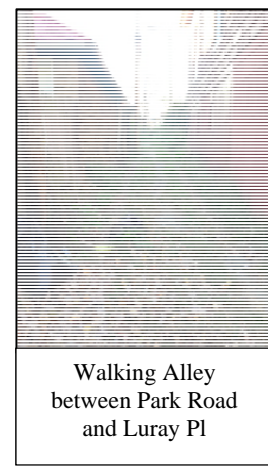
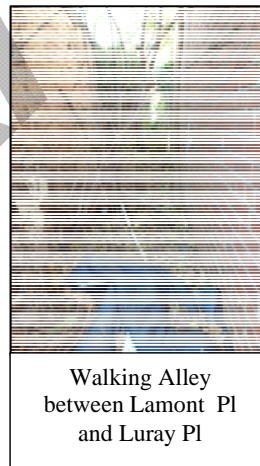
In addition to the need for wider sidewalks already highlighted in this report, many corners and sidewalks in Park View do not yet have wheelchair ramps. Additional ramps are needed at the following locations:

- 400 Kenyon Street
- 400 Luray Place
- 400 Manor Place
- 3503 Warder Street
- 3538 Warder Street



## 7. Maintenance of walking alleys

Park View hosts several walking alleys, which are alleys too small to easily accommodate auto traffic. The narrower of these two alleys is located to the north of the 400 block of Lamont (between Lamont and Luray). A slightly wider alley is located between Park Road and Luray Place. The alleys quickly become overgrown during the summer, making them area attractive for dumping and illicit activity. The dumping problem was vividly illustrated during a recent neighborhood walk-through by the Streets Working Group: we found a duffle bag with a dead pet inside in the walking alley between Park Road and Luray Place.



In February, the Luray-Warder Neighborhood Association and ANC Commissioner Rashida Brown conducted a walk-through of the alleys with officials from DDOT. DDOT has pledged to re-pave the alley between Park Road and Luray, either during the next “Alleypalooza” event, or as part of the regular alley repaving schedule.

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3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

The Streets Working Group is interested in identifying the city agency responsible for clearing and maintaining these allies, and ensuring more frequent maintenance in both summer and winter, including trimming plant growth and prompt clearance of trash and debris. It may also be necessary to have this area re-paved to reduce plant growth.

## 8. Signage Needed

The Streets Working Group has identified several areas in Park View that lack adequate signage.

Cars driving east off Park Road often turn the wrong way down Warder Street (one way northbound) or Park Place (one way southbound). Large “do not enter” signs on both sides of Warder Street and Park Place could prevent this hazard.

On Park Place and Kenyon Street, there is no street sign indicating to cars coming south on Park Place that the cross street is Kenyon. A sign could easily be added to the light post on the northeast corner of Kenyon and Park Place.



Finally, on the 600 block of Otis Place, cars exiting the alley driving south often turn the wrong way east on Otis Place. A one-way sign mid block, viewable from the alley, could help prevent this problem.



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3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

## Appendix 1

### 1) Solutions requiring minimal planning and community input

*Adding tree boxes on sidewalks already wide enough to accommodate tree boxes:*

- The north side of the 500 block of Lamont Street NW
- 507 Luray place NW. (Note: this portion of the sidewalk appears to have been recently repaired with substandard concrete that immediately began to pit and flake. If a replacement of the substandard material is planned, tree boxes could be installed at this time.)
- The 700 block of Rock Creek Church Road (also recently re-paved with substandard concrete). This side of Rock Creek Church Road also historically hosted tree boxes.
- The sidewalk immediately in front of the main entrance to the Park View school building.

*Opening space for trees around the Park View School by moving existing grass strips/empty planting beds along:*

- Warder Street
- Newton Place
- Note: Tree boxes have already been added along this portion of Otis Place

*ADA access to sidewalks via wheelchair ramps needed at:*

- 400 Kenyon Street
- 400 Luray Place
- 400 Manor Place
- 3503 Warder Street
- 3538 Warder Street

*Maintenance/repaving of walking alleys*

- North of the 400 block of Lamont (between Lamont and Luray).
- Park Road and Luray Place.
- Note: ANC Commissioner Rashida Brown is currently working with officials from DDOT to re-pave and maintain both alleys.

*Signage Needed*

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3538 Warder Street NW, Washington, DC 20010

- Large “do not enter” signs on both sides of Warder Street and Park Place to prevent cars from turning the wrong way off of Park Road.
- On Park Place and Kenyon Street, there is no street sign indicating to cars coming south on Park Place that the cross street is Kenyon.
- On the 600 block of Otis Place, a one-way sign mid block, viewable from the alley, to help prevent cars from turning the wrong way (similar alleys in Northern Park View should also be considered for such signage).

*Adding a place-making “Welcome to Park View” sign in the grassy area to the north of the 400 block of Kenyon Street. (Note: as this area is property of the Soldier’s Home, this sign could only be added with the cooperation of the Soldier’s Home).*

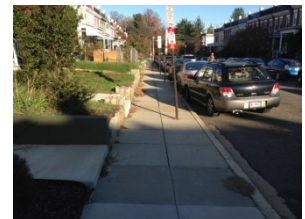
## 2) Solutions requiring moderate planning and community input

*Bio-retention curb-outs in the following possible locations:*

- The 3500 block of Warder Street, between the two crosswalks
- The 400 block of Lamont Street in the area in front of the corner store or in spaces between driveways on the north side of the street.

*Right-Sizing Newton and Luray*

The 400 blocks of Luray Pl NW and 400 Newton Pl NW are both potentially unnecessarily wide to accommodate one-way traffic flow on these streets, encouraging cars to speed and double-park on these blocks. The Streets Working Group believes that these streets could be re-sized to conform with existing street width minimums to increase sidewalk and green space without negatively affecting parking or traffic congestion. (see Appendix 2 for an assessment of Luray Place).



## 3) Solutions requiring high levels of planning and community input.

*Solutions for Park Place*

- Narrowing Park Place to a single lane.
- Adding a sidewalk and tree boxes on the east side of Park Place, abutting the Soldier’s home.
- Tree boxes and a wider sidewalk on the west side of Park Place.
- Creating a two-way or protected bike lane. Note: if a two-way bike lane were added, the existing bike lane on Warder Street could be moved, allowing the sidewalks to be expanded along Warder as well.

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## *Solutions for Warder and Cross Streets around the Park View School and Park.*

- Adding speed bumps, restoring/adding new rumble strips, or other speed mitigation along Warder Street
- Additional traffic lights along Warder
- Placing stop signs at all intersections along problem sections of Warder, particularly Quincy and Princeton streets.
- Moving the northbound one-way bicycle lane to Park Road; thereby allowing for wider sidewalks and tree boxes along Warder.
- Narrowing the street along the portion of Otis place between the recreation center and the school to discourage speeding while simultaneously creating more space for wheel chairs and tree boxes.
- Closing off this section of Otis Place and combining the school and recreation center into one property, possibly a larger recreation center or new wing on school building to provide indoor recreation space for the school and community (a significant change requiring appropriate study and further community input).
- Adding speed bumps, rumble strips, a slightly raised crosswalk, additional signage, or other options to mitigate speeding on Otis Place.
- Adding speed bumps, rumble strips, or other mitigation along Park Road
- Converting Park Road into a one-way street (a significant change requiring appropriate study and community input)

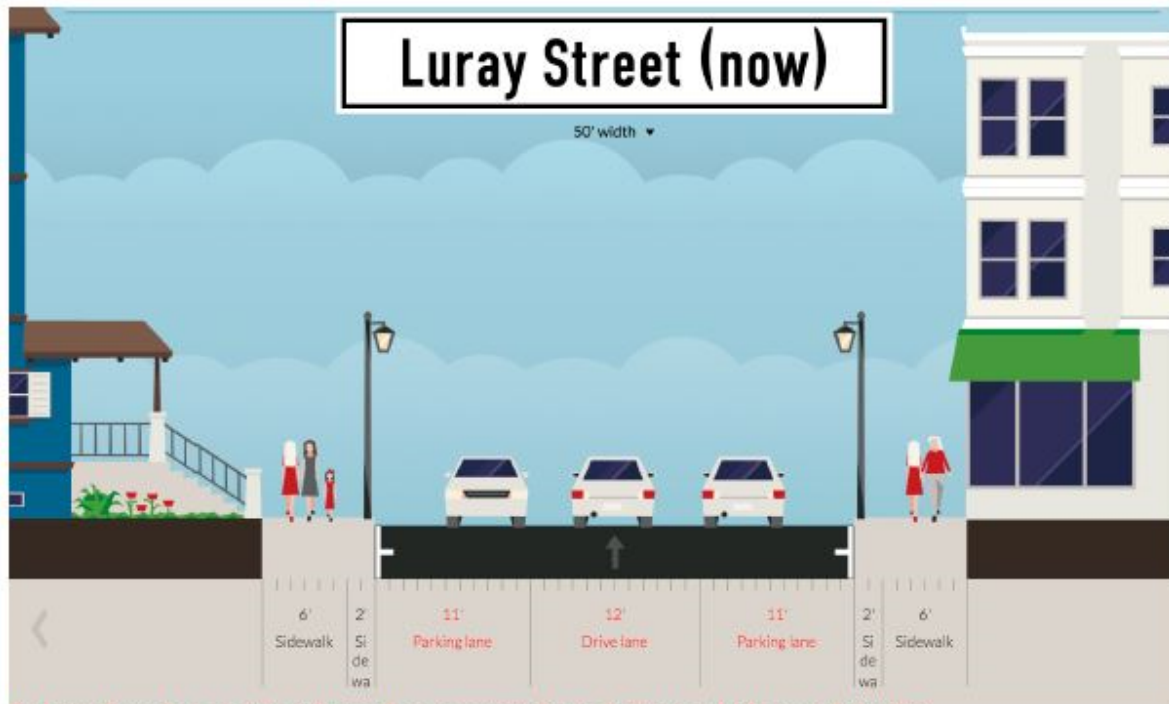
## *Solutions around Washington Hospital Center and Wangari Gardens*

- Along the 400 block of Kenyon Street, reducing the number of lanes sooner (2 lanes on the portion of the 400 block of Kenyon immediately north of Wangari gardens, one lane on the residential portion of the 400 block of Kenyon).
- On the 400 block of Irving Street (the part of Irving immediately south of Wangari gardens), creating a protected pedestrian crossing signal and/or additional signage at this intersection so pedestrians can cross safely to the hospital.
- Removing a lane of traffic and widening the sidewalk along the stretch of Park Place that begins at Kenyon Street NW (3120 Park Pl) and runs south to Michigan Avenue.
- Creating an easy route for pedestrians to reach the Children's Hospital from Park View via the Michigan Avenue overpass.

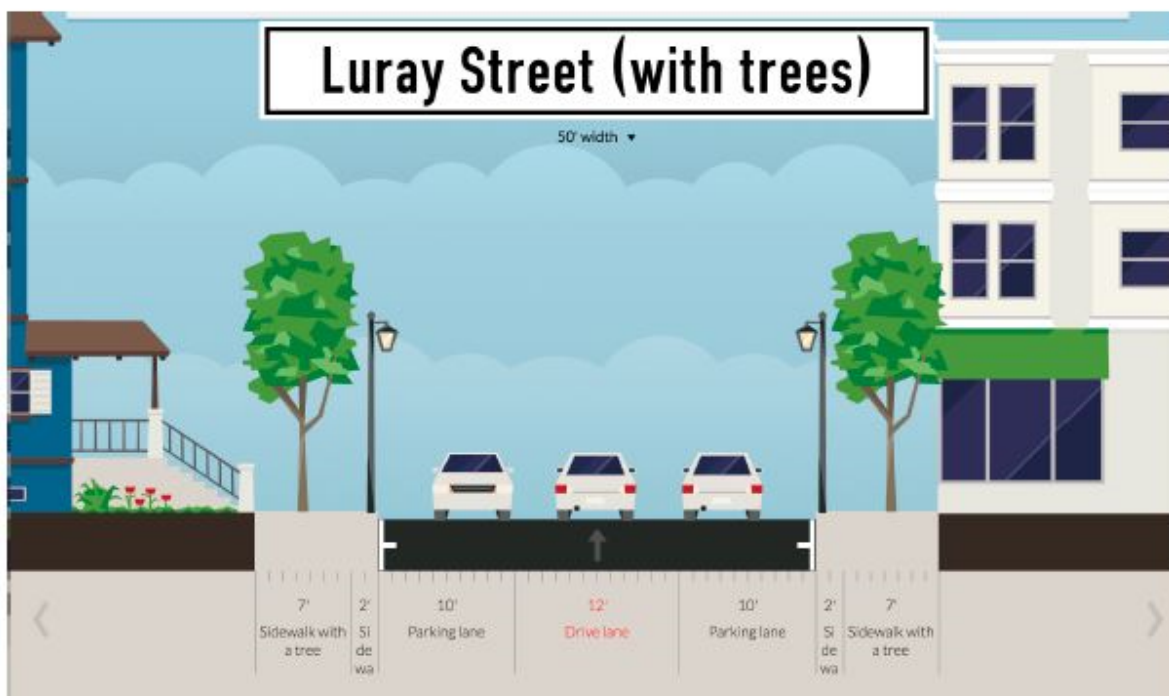


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Red signifies when an item is larger than necessary for pedestrian, vehicle or cyclist safety.



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