

# Thomas Jefferson Memorial Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP)

National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior





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## Purpose and Need

- Purpose:
  - The purpose of this project is to make the experiences and facilities of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial accessible to all visitors by removing or reducing barriers.
  - Improve experience of all visitors to the Jefferson Memorial.
- Need:
  - The project is needed because the Jefferson Memorial currently has only one accessible route to the statuary chamber level, which requires visitors to use a ramp on the south side of the Memorial to a sidewalk leading to the lower level entrances.
  - If coming from the Tidal Basin, visitors must travel all the way around the Memorial, to the south side ramp and back towards the Tidal Basin to the lower level entrances (accessible route is over 1,000 feet long).





## Site Location





## Site History

- Commissioned by an Act of Congress in 1934.
- In 1937, John Russell Pope chosen as the architect for the Memorial.
- In 1938, Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. was appointed as the Memorial's landscape architect.
- Built on land reclaimed from the swampy banks of the Potomac River. Soil used as fill dredged directly from the river.
- Construction started in 1938.
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of the Memorial on November 15, 1939.
- Dedicated in 1943, has since become a National Landmark.
- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.



HABS aerial photo, 1994



HABS photo, 1994



HABS photo, south elevation, 1994

- In 1975, the first attempts were made to remove barriers to access the Memorial:
  - original planter on the south side of the Memorial modified to create two accessible sloped walkways;
  - toilet facilities provided on the lower level and a new elevator which allowed visitors with disabilities to visit the portico and statuary chamber levels of the Memorial.
- In 1998, the Memorial underwent another major rehabilitation to remove additional barriers.
  - lower level of the Memorial expanded to allow for an exhibit space, a bookstore, and a gift shop.
  - Existing restrooms relocated, enlarged, and made accessible
  - Added a family restroom.
  - Elevator replaced in kind.







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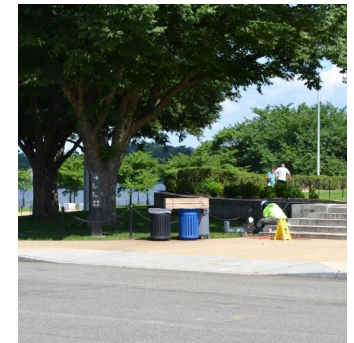
## Existing Conditions



1 Tidal Basin Plaza Level



2 Littleleaf Japanese Hollies along Lower Terrace Level



3 Steps to Lower Terrace Level



4 Yew plantings at Tidal Basin



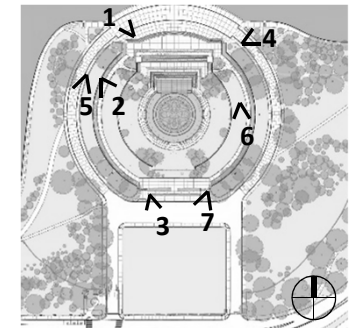
5 Yew Plantings with Zelkova in foreground



6 Littleleaf Japanese Hollies



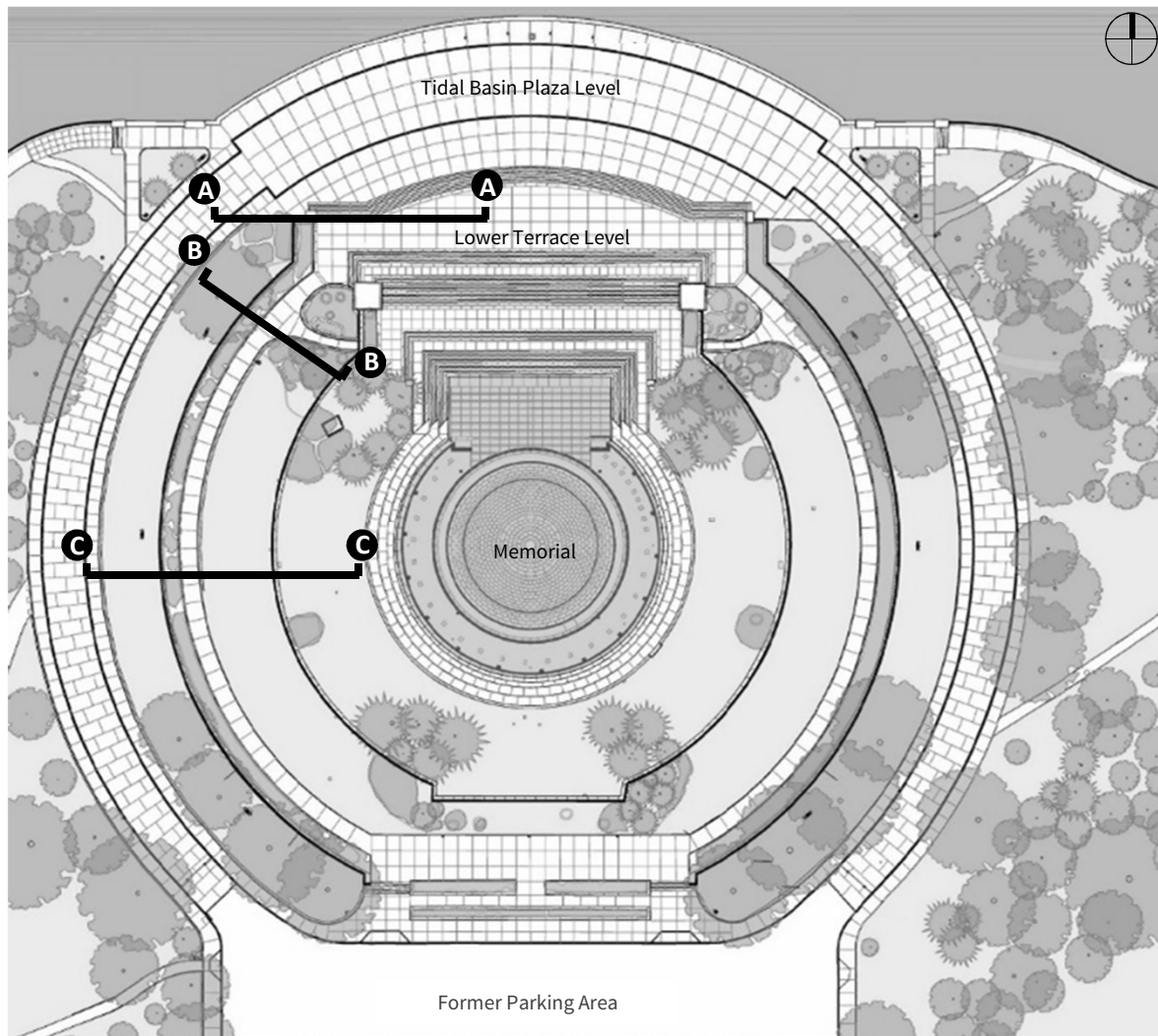
7 Zelkovas on southeast side of Memorial



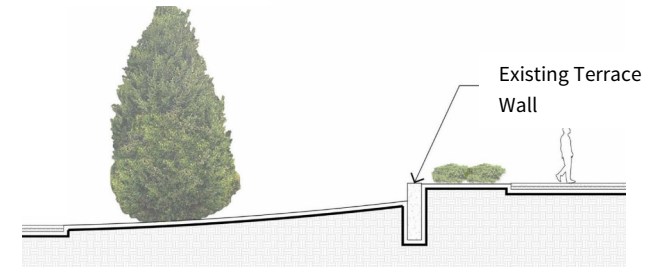




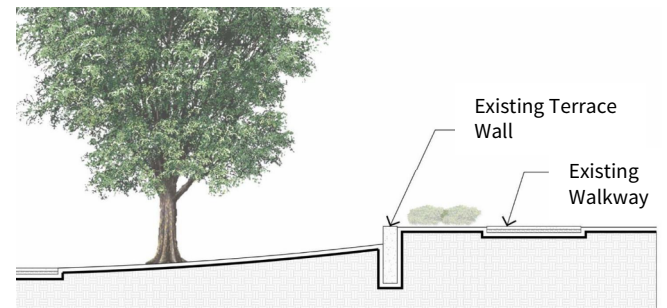
## Existing Conditions



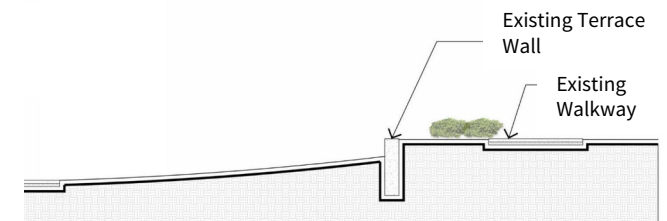
Section A-A



Section B-B

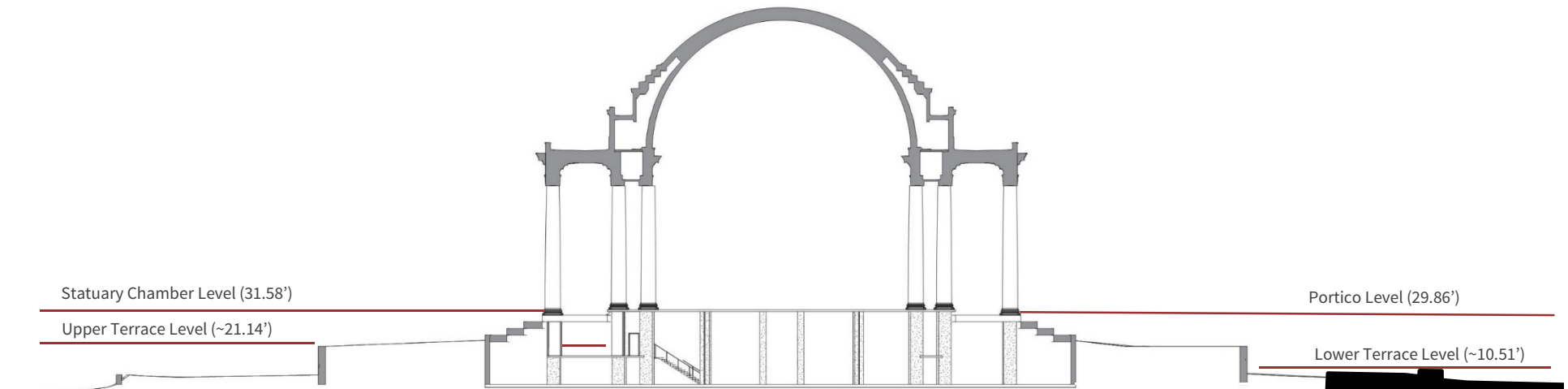
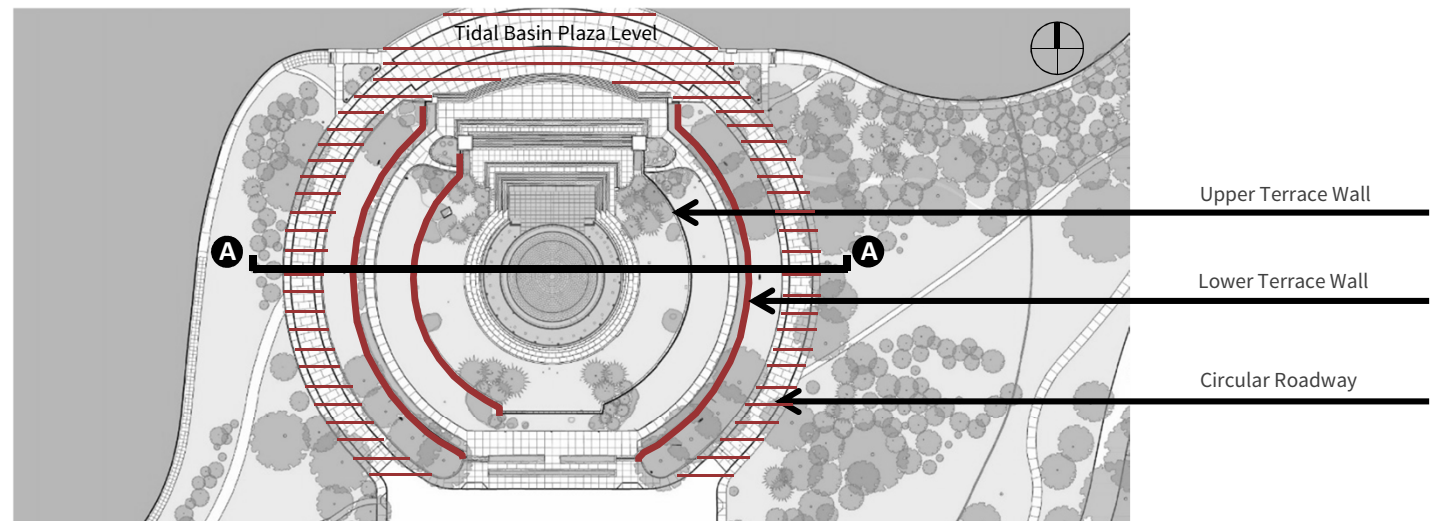


Section C-C





## Existing Conditions



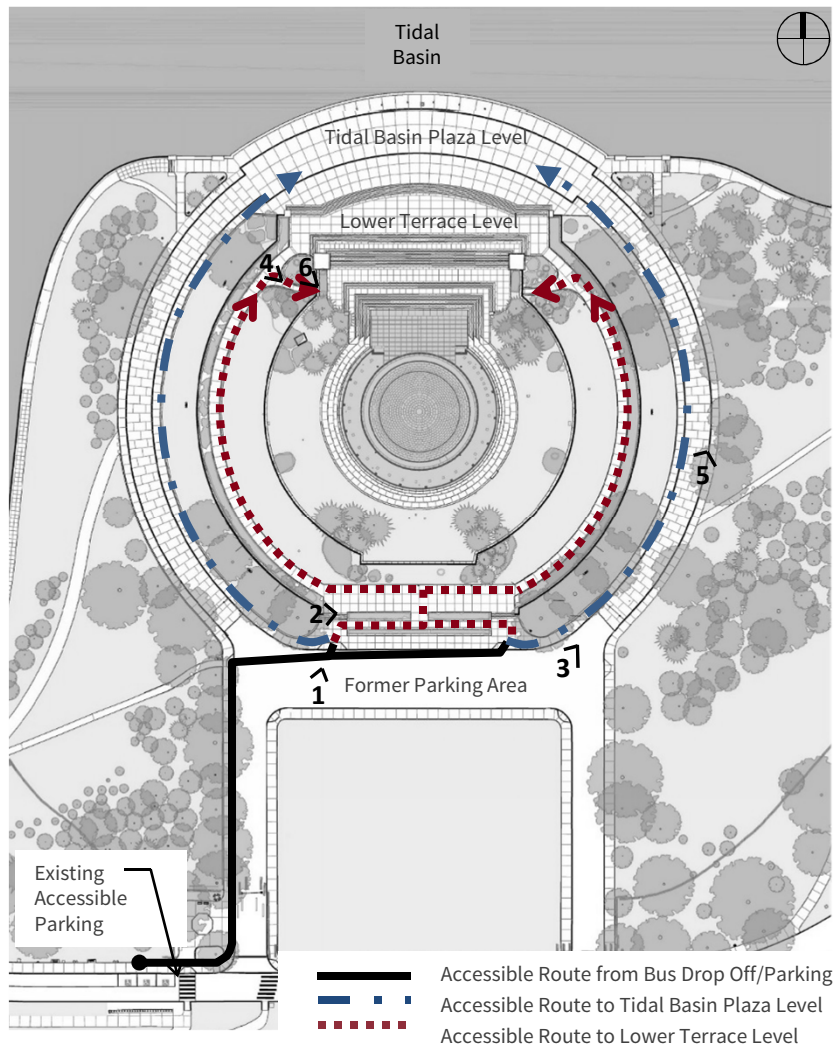


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## Existing Conditions



1 Path to sloped walkways



2 Sloped walkway to Lower Terrace Level



3 Entrance to east side Circular Roadway



4 West entrance to Lower Level



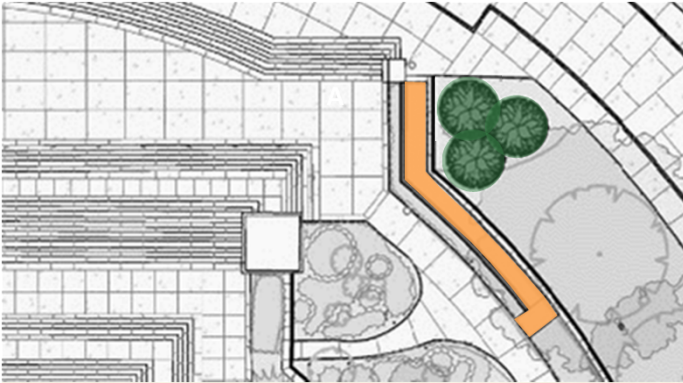
5 East side Circular Roadway



6 West side entrance at Lower Terrace Level

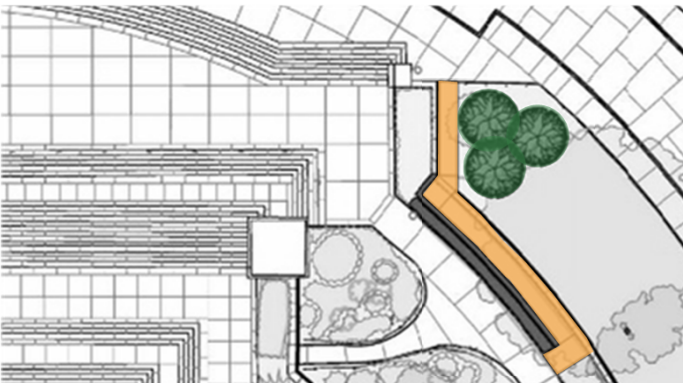


**Design Evolution**



## Option 1: Sloped Walkway within Existing Planter

- Walkway entirely within planter
- Landscape hedge reduced
- Walkway width of 5'-0"
- Maximum walkway slope is 5.00%
- Too narrow to provide handrail



## Option 2: Sloped Walkway Partially within Existing Planter

- Front façade of planter is unaltered; walkway cuts into planter from side
- Landscape hedge reduced
- Walkway width of 5'-0"
- Maximum walkway slope is 5.00%
- Handrail located at outside edge of walkway



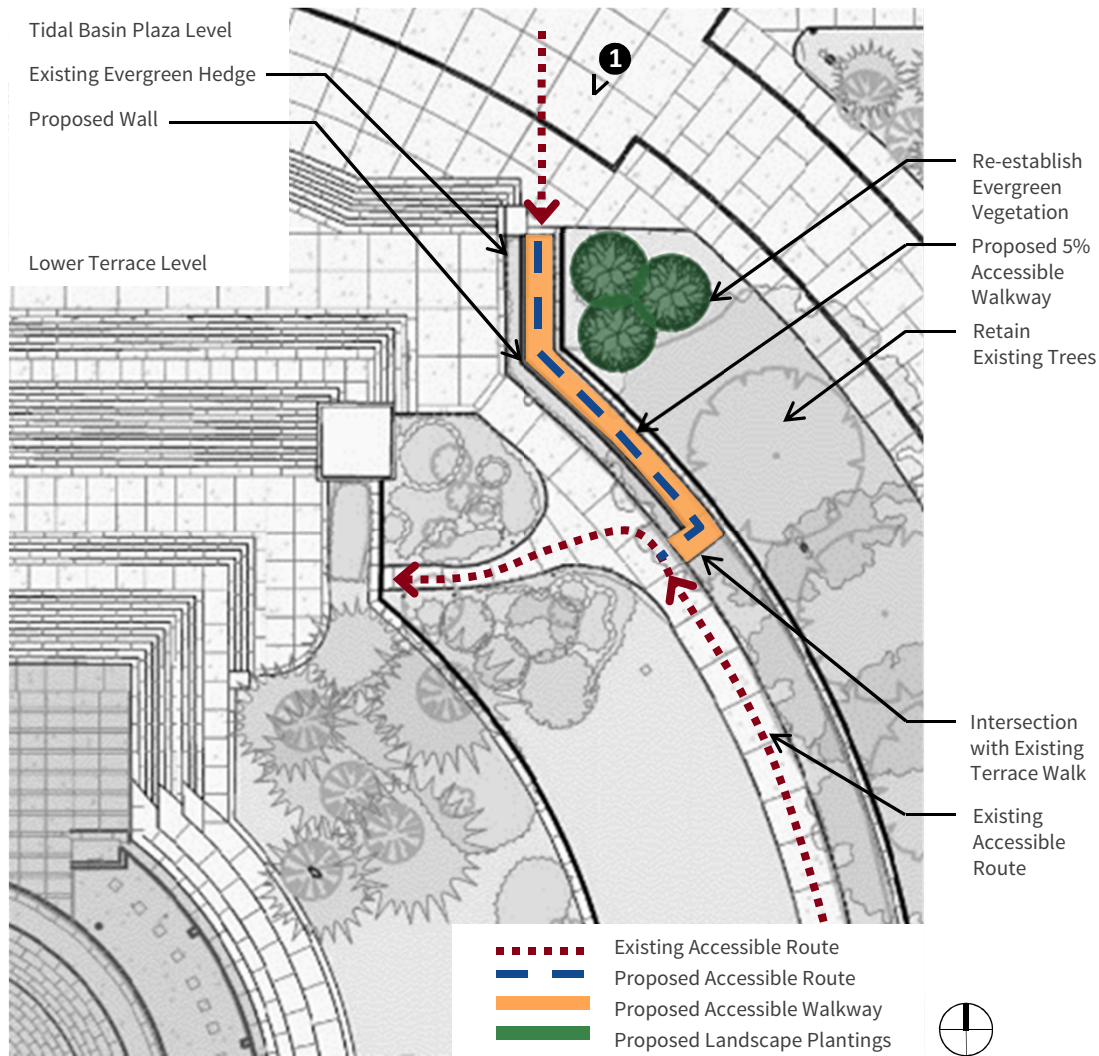
## Option 3: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter

- Walkway completely outside planter
- Landscape hedge remains intact
- Capstone removed at existing terrace wall (reversible)
- Walkway width of 8'-0"
- Maximum walkway slope is 4.00-4.50%
- Handrail located at outside edge of walkway





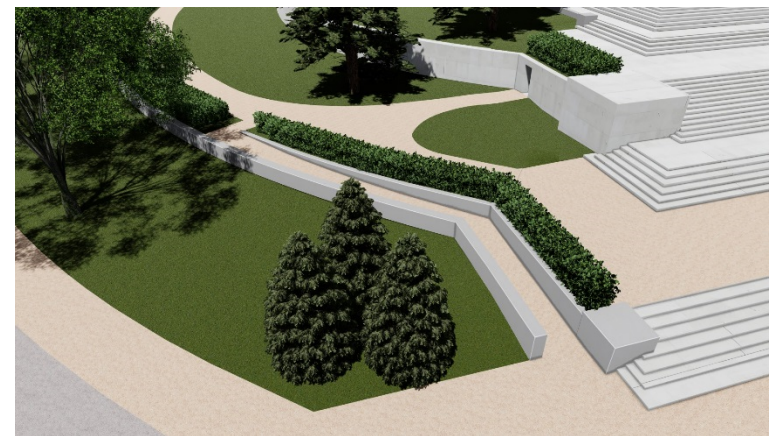
## Option 1: Sloped Walkway within Existing Planter



Plan of Option 1



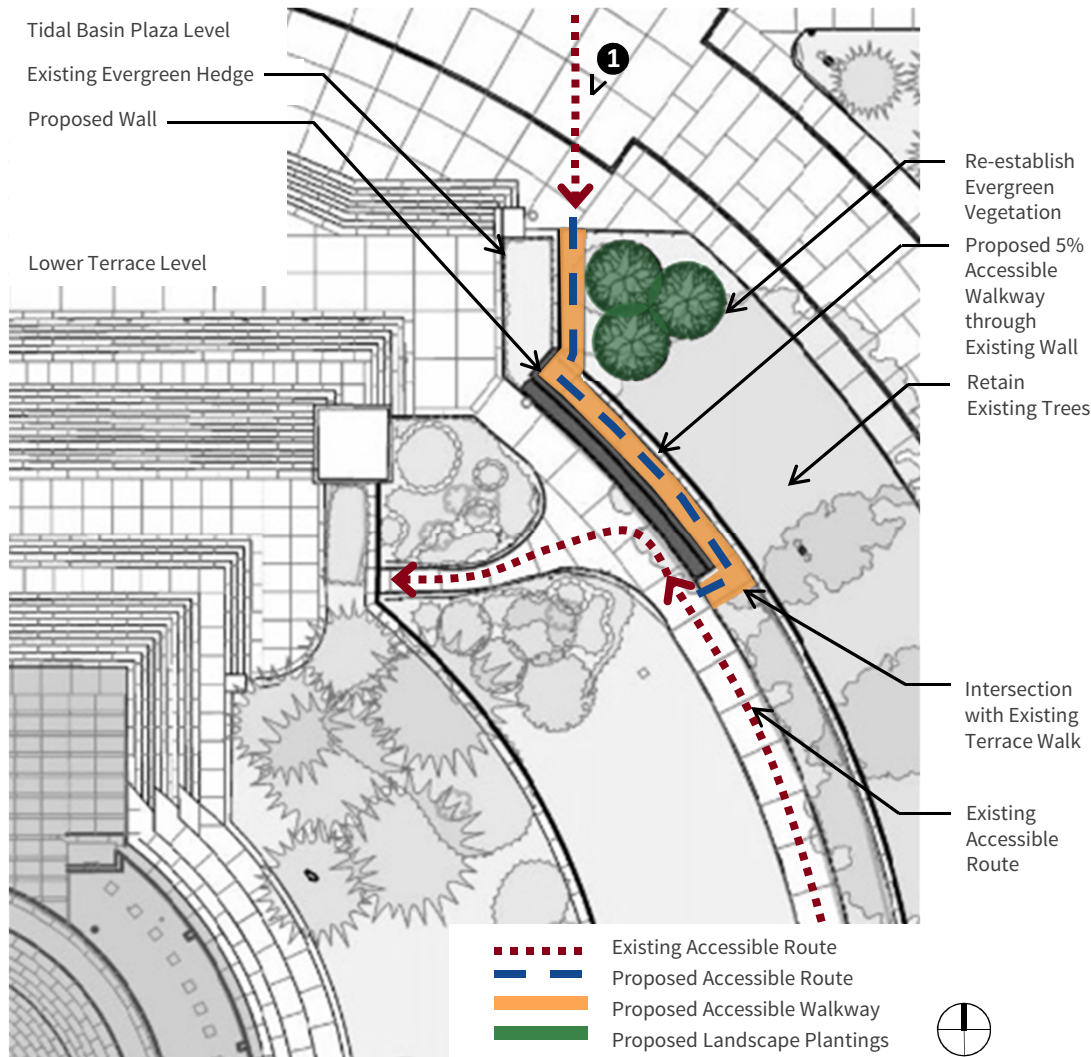
1 Rendering of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter



Aerial rendering of east sloped walkway



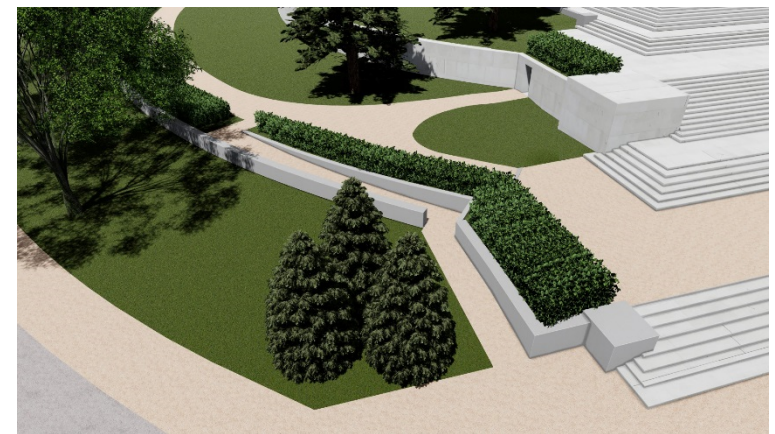
## Option 2: Sloped Walkway partially within Existing Planter



Plan of Option 2



1 Rendering of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter

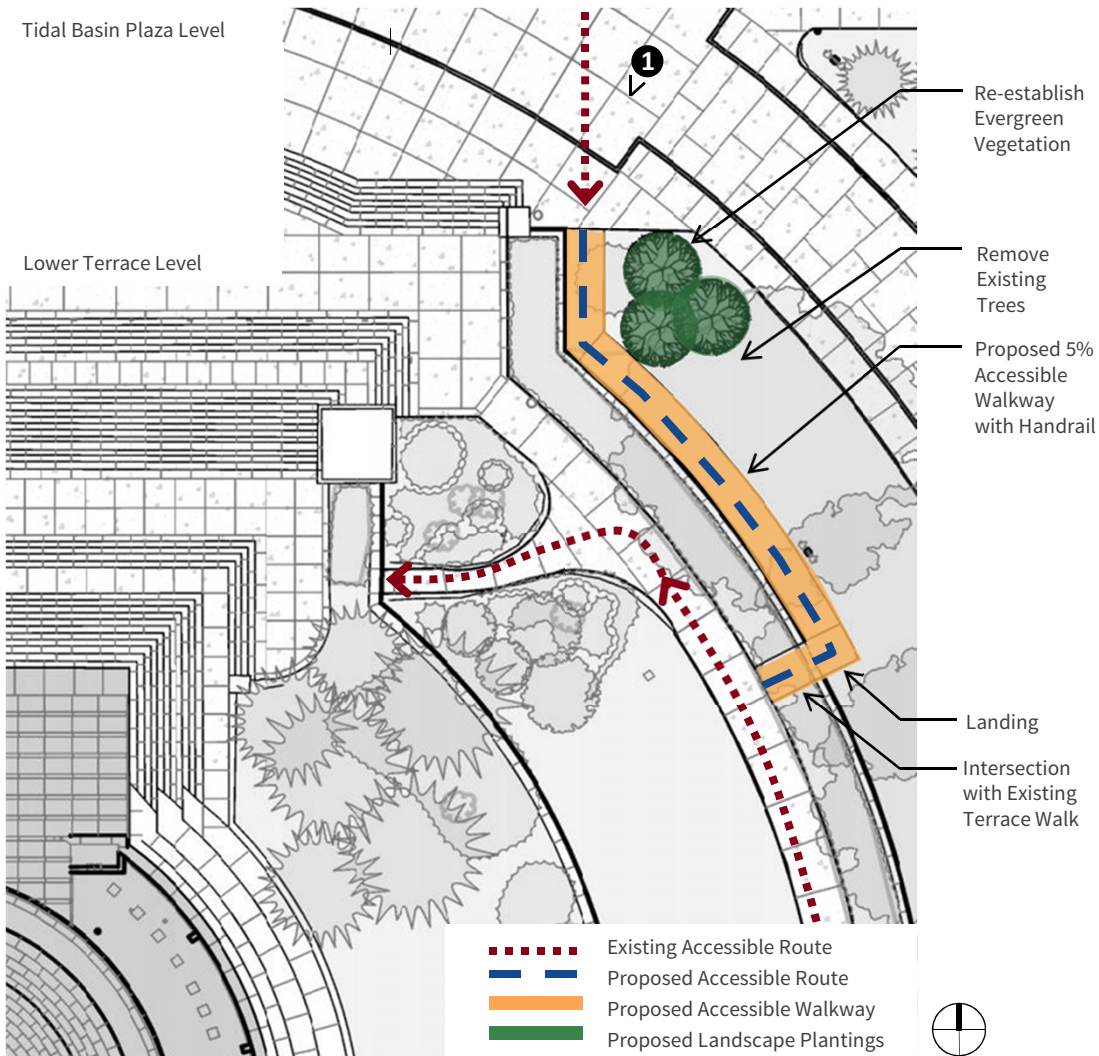


Aerial rendering of east sloped walkway





## Option 3: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter

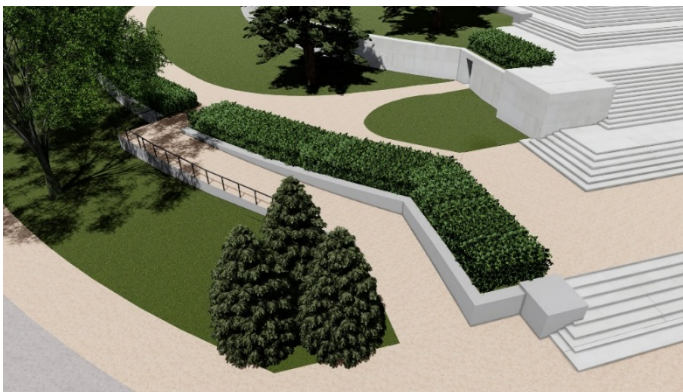
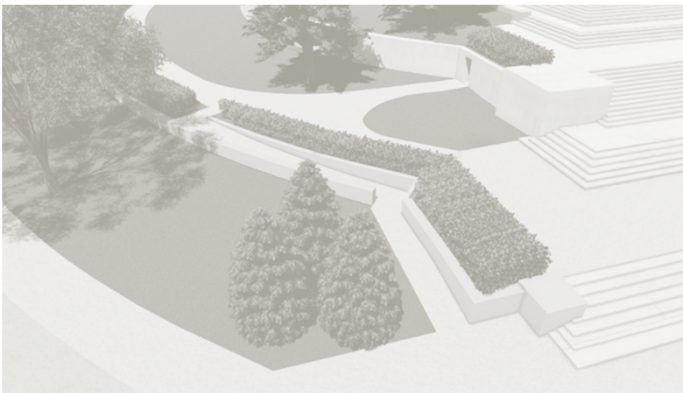
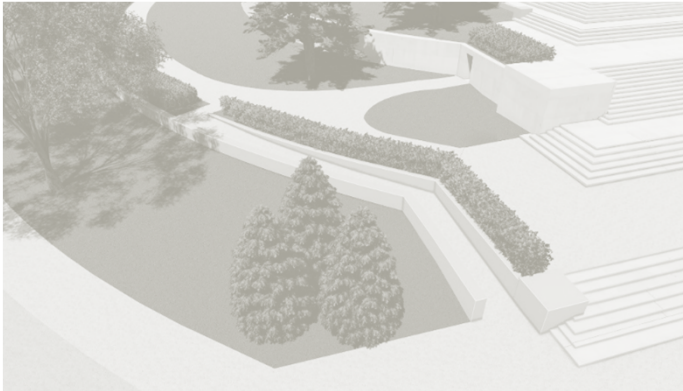


1 Rendering of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter



Aerial rendering of east sloped walkway





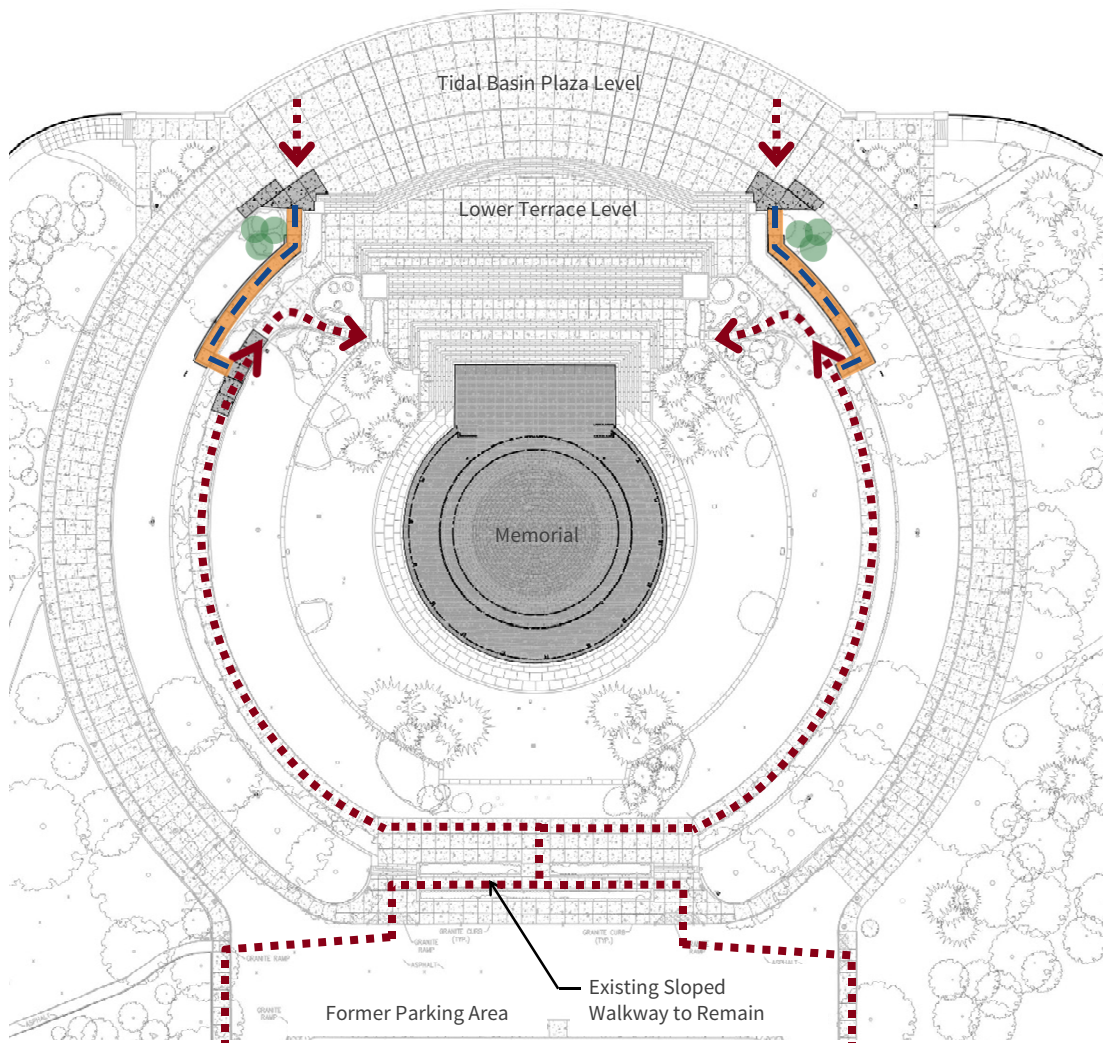
## **Preferred Alternative: Option 3: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter**

This option was selected for further development due to the following advantages:

- Walkway width of 8'-0" - enough for two wheelchairs to pass
- Minimal visual impact to cultural landscape
- Minimal physical impact to historic fabric
- Walkway slope is reduced (maximum of 4.00-4.50%)
- Allows for two-way wheelchair traffic on sloped walkway



## Proposed Design: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter



The proposed design allows for universal access from the Tidal Basin plaza level and significantly reduces the accessible route distance from the Tidal Basin plaza level to the entrances at the lower level.

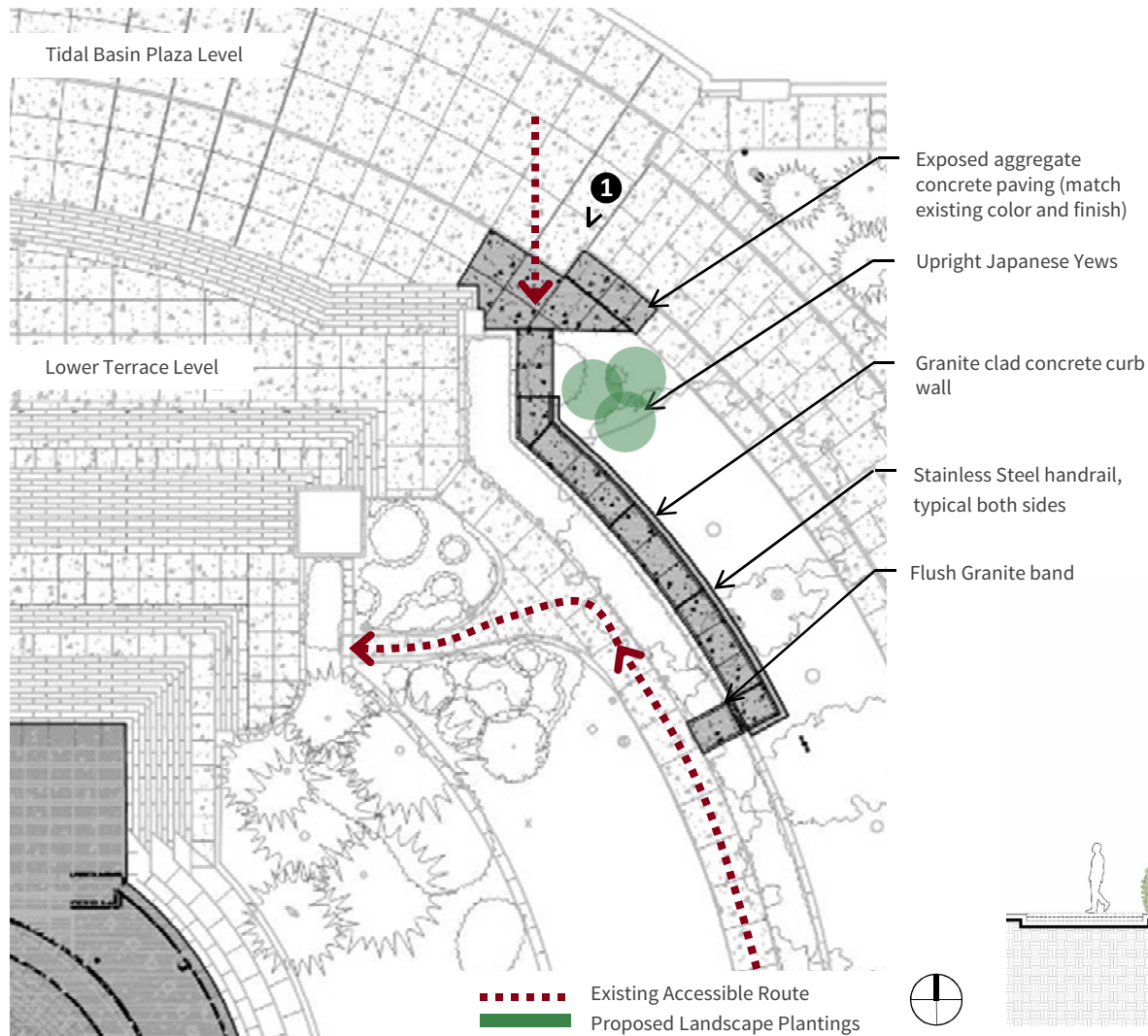
- Walkway located outside of historic terrace planter
- Walkway width of 8'-0"
- Handrails at both sides of walkway
- Walkway slope 4.00%-4.50%
- Significantly reduces distance from Tidal Basin plaza level to lower level

- Existing Accessible Route
- Proposed Accessible Route
- Proposed Accessible Walkway
- Proposed Landscape Plantings

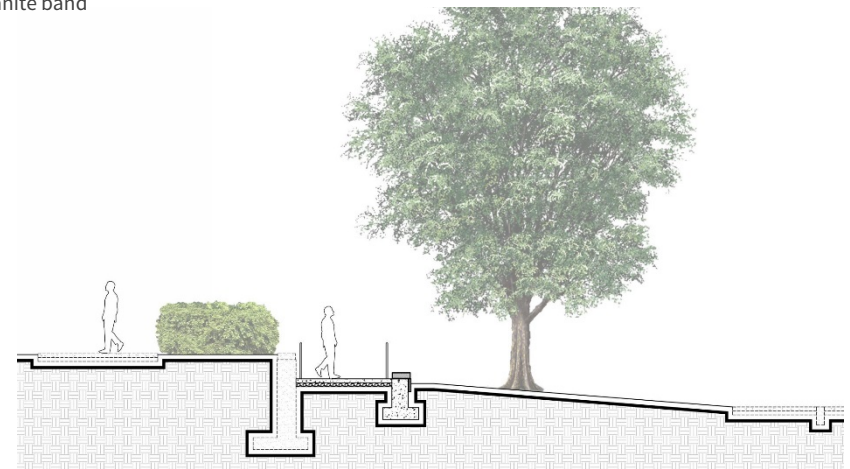




## Proposed Design: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter



1 Existing east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter



Section through proposed sloped walkway





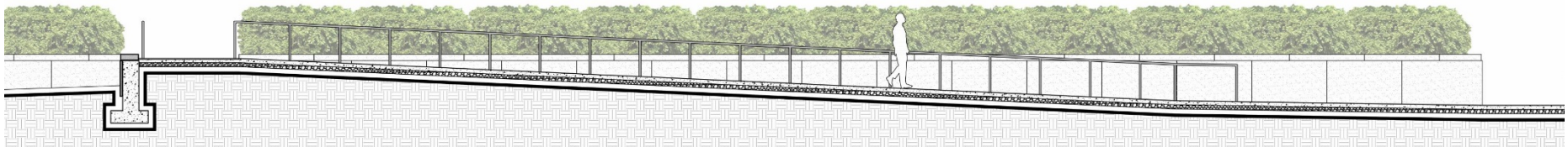
## Proposed Design: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter



Existing east terrace wall and planter



Rendering of proposed east sloped walkway at terrace wall and planter



Section through proposed sloped walkway





## **Proposed Design: Sloped Walkway outside Existing Planter**



Aerial rendering of proposed sloped walkway