

# COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP

Summary of Findings

10 March 2007

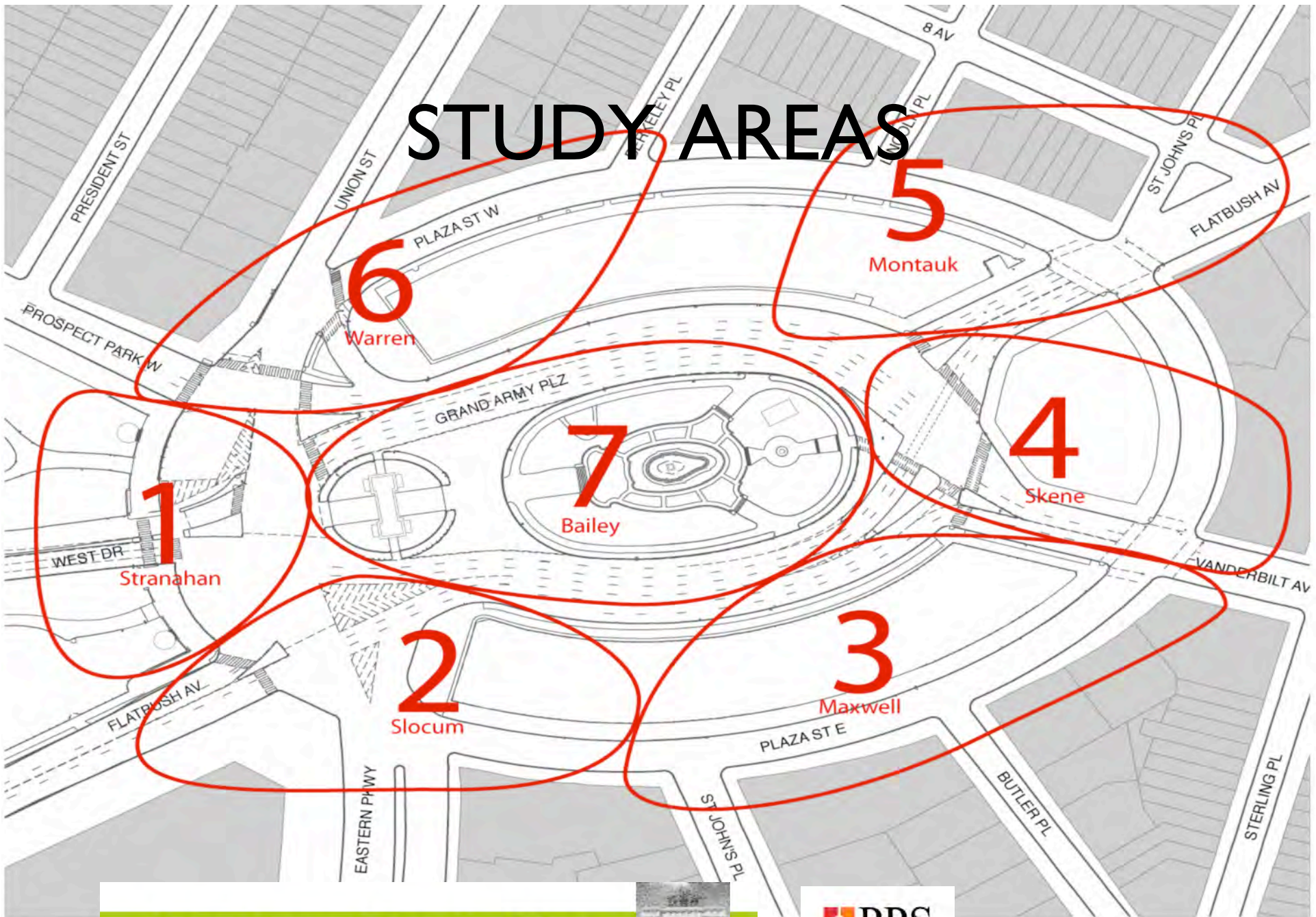
**Grand Army Plaza Coalition**

<http://www.grandarmyplaza.org>

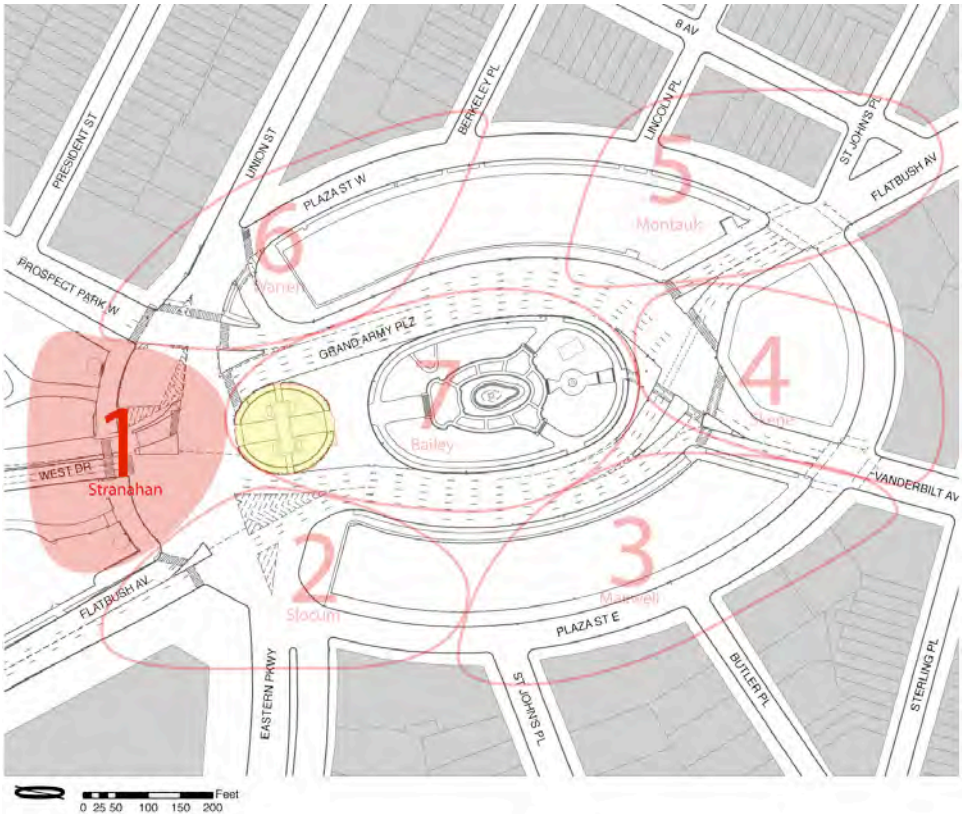


**PPS**  
PROJECT *for*  
PUBLIC SPACES

# STUDY AREAS



# STUDY AREA I



- Main entrance to Prospect Park
- Site of Greenmarket
- Could be the easiest access to the Arch



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- Large space with **great potential**, esp. to green the area
  - Views from this area, especially of the Arch
  - Proximity to the Park
  - **The Greenmarket**
  - People-watching
- **Drab** - currently more asphalt than “greenery”
  - **Not a pedestrian- or bicycle-friendly area**
  - Gazebos are not good places for sitting, relaxing
  - **No restrooms**
  - No bike parking
  - **Poor separation between Greenmarket entrance and adjacent streets**
  - **Poor access to the Arch**



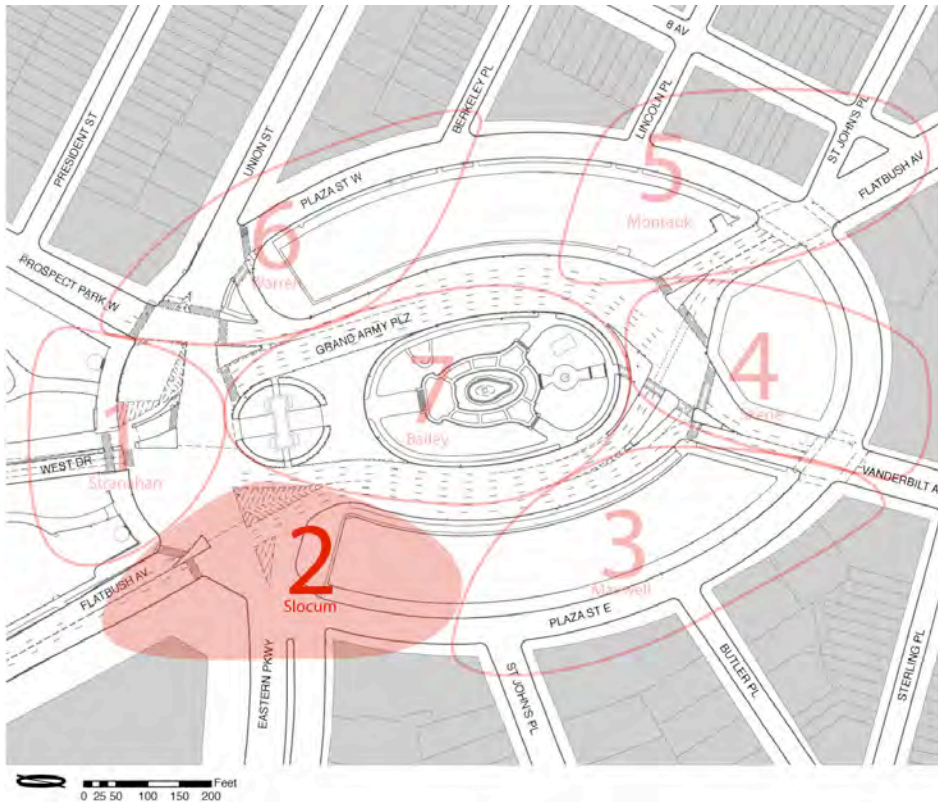
# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- Separate Arch from roadway; **create a plaza with a different material than the road surface**
  - Barrier between the traffic and the park
  - Separate entrance into park drive for peds (esp. families with strollers)
  - **Add seating, plants, trees, decoration**
  - Additional Greenmarket days
  - **Play areas; dog run**
  - **Space for street performers**
- Car-free Prospect Park
  - **Create a performance area**
  - **Install a Shake Shack** as at Madison Square Park
  - A permanent vendor at the Greenmarket site
  - Extend the tiles that are currently on the walkway to expand the plaza and create a special place
  - **Improve crosswalks; lengthen crossing times**





# STUDY AREA 2



- Main entrance to Central Library
- One Prospect Park (apartments)
- Flatbush Avenue & Eastern Parkway



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- Great potential
- Excellent vistas - of the Park, Arch, fountain, Library, Eastern Parkway, Flatbush Avenue
- Don't get a sense of where you are - no signage to connect you to the various areas
- Can't see the connections with Eastern Parkway hill



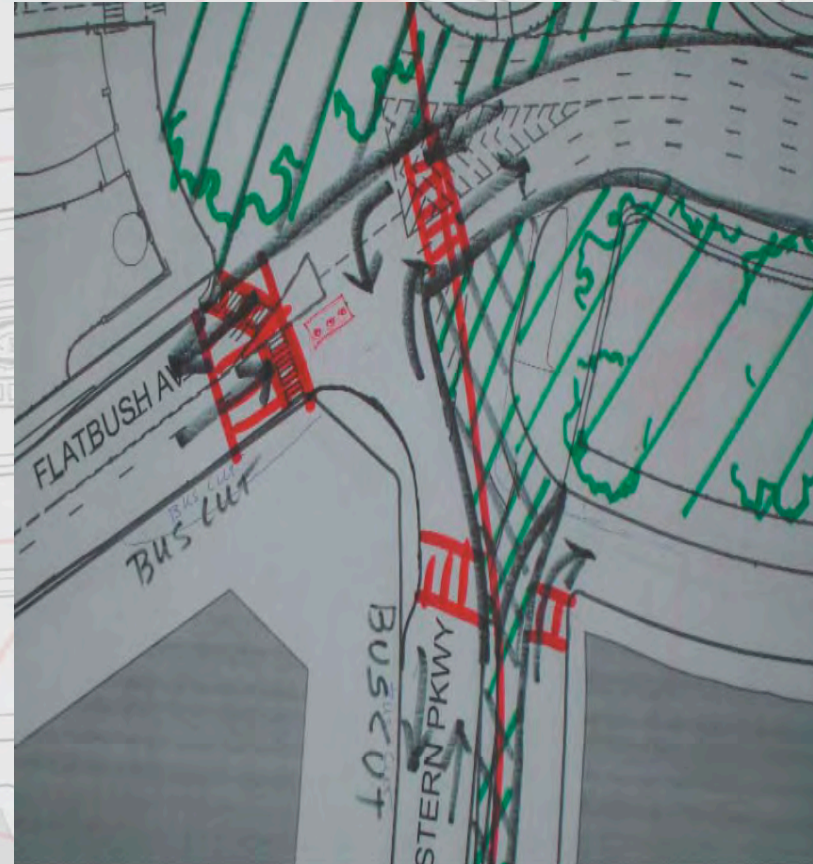
# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- More and **improved crosswalks**:
  - Eastern Parkway median to the berm
  - Berm to the Arch
  - Crosswalk at Flatbush needs to be bigger and more accessible
  - Make crosswalks more identifiable
- **Planters and planting** near the subway vent
- **Improved signage**
- **Redesign and extend the berm south**
- **Connect berm with improved Eastern Parkway median**
- **Reduce traffic lanes**
- **Add traffic light**

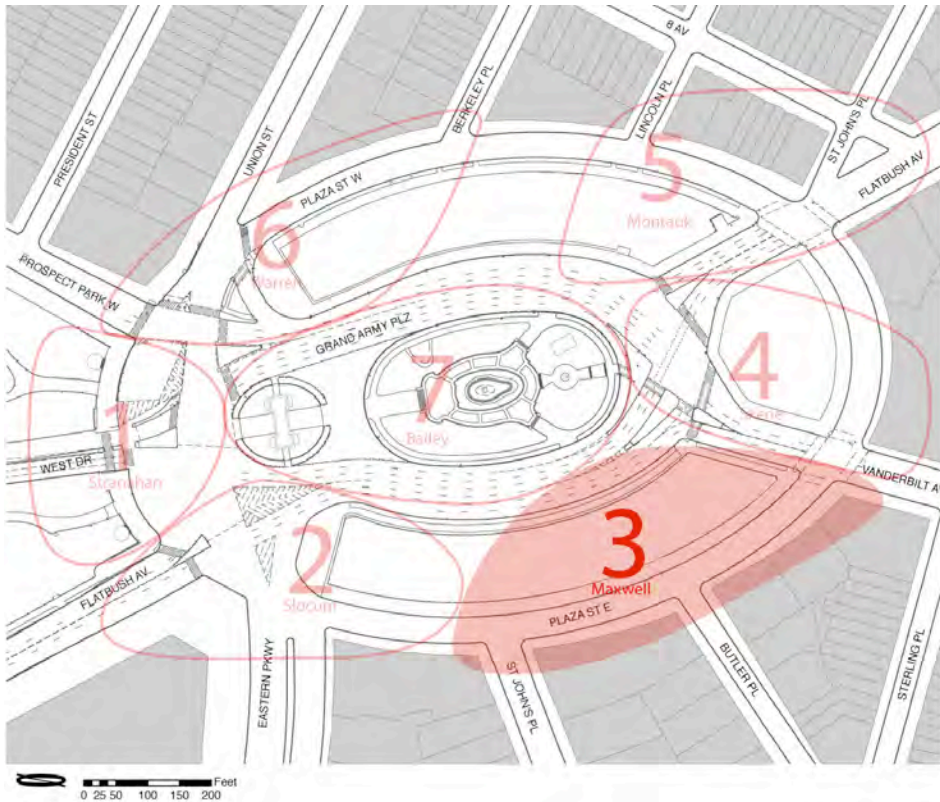


# PARTNERSHIPS AND VISION

- Neighborhood groups; tenants associations
- Prospect Park Alliance
- Cultural orgs.
  - Could help with:
  - Maintenance (Friends of BPL Central)
  - Plantings and landscaping (BBG)
  - Temporary artwork (Brooklyn Museum)



# STUDY AREA 3



- Plaza Street East
- East Berm
- Connections to St. Johns Place, Butler Place, Vanderbilt Avenue



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- It works—on the outside side of the street
  - Bike lane
  - Seating
  - Green-ness; it's an oasis
  - Sheltered
  - Wide sidewalks
  - Connection with other areas
- Hard to get people to the fountain - how to do this?
  - Bus transit area: no shelter there - windiest corner on the street
  - People drive in the bike lane
  - On the “inside” part of the circle: there is so much that is not used
  - Sense of danger on “inside” of Plaza Street
  - Much wasted space



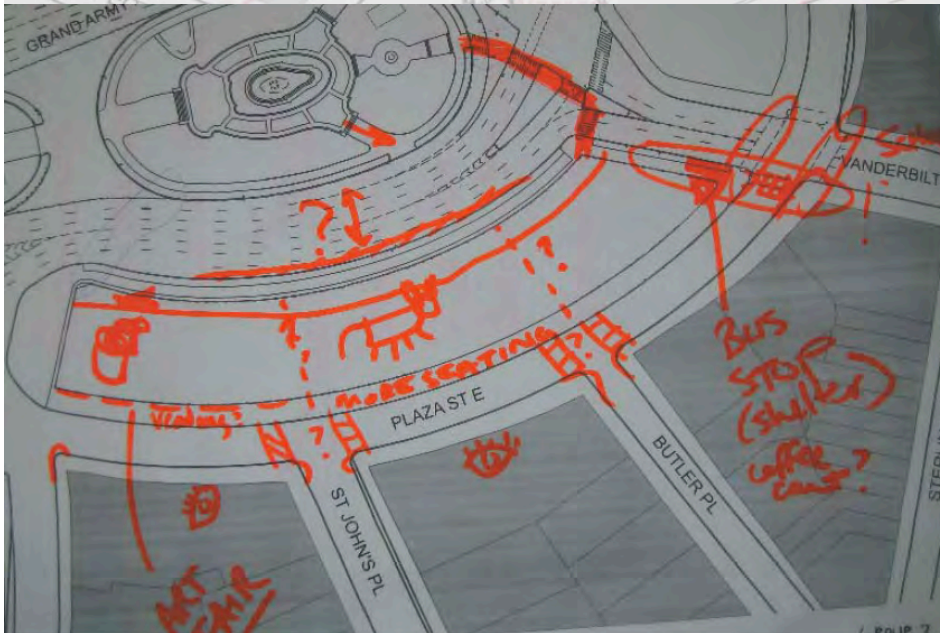
# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- Better maintenance, garbage collections
  - Cobblestones/pavers, contextual fencing at berms
  - Semi-circle plaza from Plaza Street around the corner for a new bus stop plaza on Vanderbilt Avenue
  - Evaluate current bus shelter
  - Calm Plaza Street East
  - More benches and plantings
  - Dog run on inside of berm
  - Pedestrian-oriented signage
- Rethink the berm
  - Take ownership of the berms
  - Create a street-level pedestrian crossing to Bailey Fountain
  - Create an underpass to the Arch/fountain

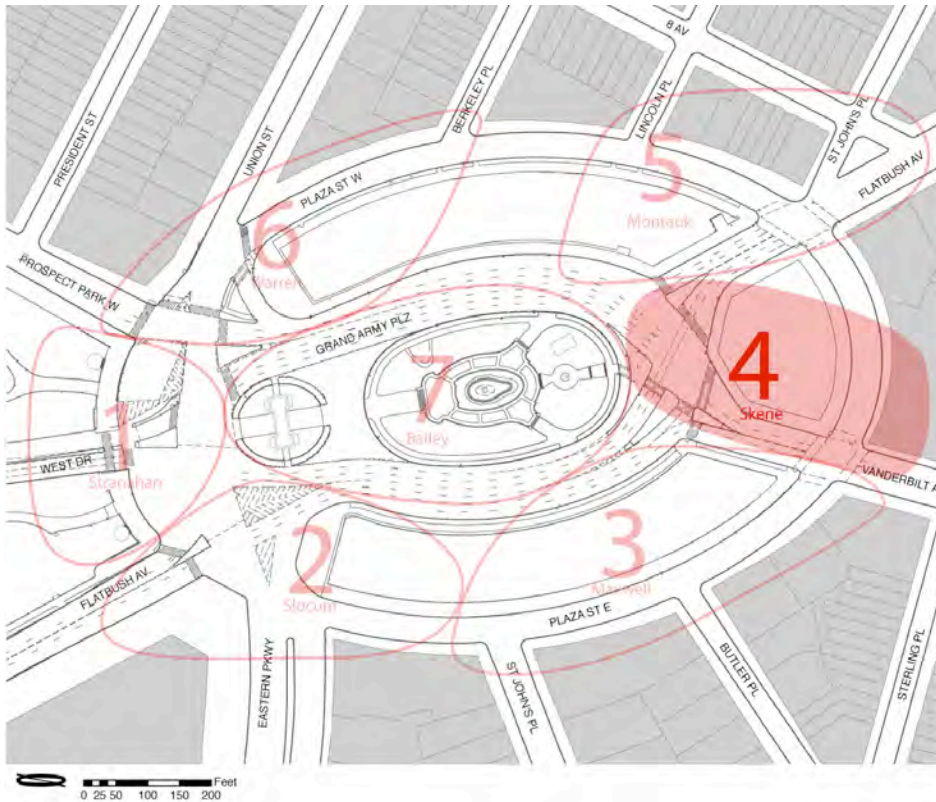


# VISION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Co-op boards to help support maintenance and care of the berms
- MTA New York City Transit
- Vanderbilt Avenue Merchants Association
- Flatbush Avenue business groups



# STUDY GROUP 4



- Vanderbilt Avenue & Flatbush Avenue intersection
- Could be a good path to the Fountain



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- **Trees**
- This is a **gateway** to Grand Army Plaza
- Good transit access with bus & train connections
- Pedestrian traffic on Plaza Street
- **Plaza Street seating**
- Efficient traffic

- **Overwhelming traffic**
- Safety issues: traffic doesn't always stop at the red light
- **Area not connected to the Arch**
- No reason to stop and linger; people just pass right through
- Traffic merging onto Flatbush is a problem



# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- Better striping/timing at pedestrian crossings
  - Safe berm access; program activities in the berms
  - Better pedestrian signage, banners, etc. for attractions
  - A second kiosk
    - Kiosks could have a directory that brings residents and local organizations on board for berm design and maintenance
  - Children's playground
- Encourage commerce (push carts, kiosks, etc.)
  - Flatbush Avenue BRT
  - Change the signal timing for pedestrians on Vanderbilt corners
  - Decrease lanes and turning movements; extend island so Flatbush & Vanderbilt traffic doesn't collide
  - Create better direct routes, sight lines to Arch/fountain
  - Programming in berms
  - Increase bike safety

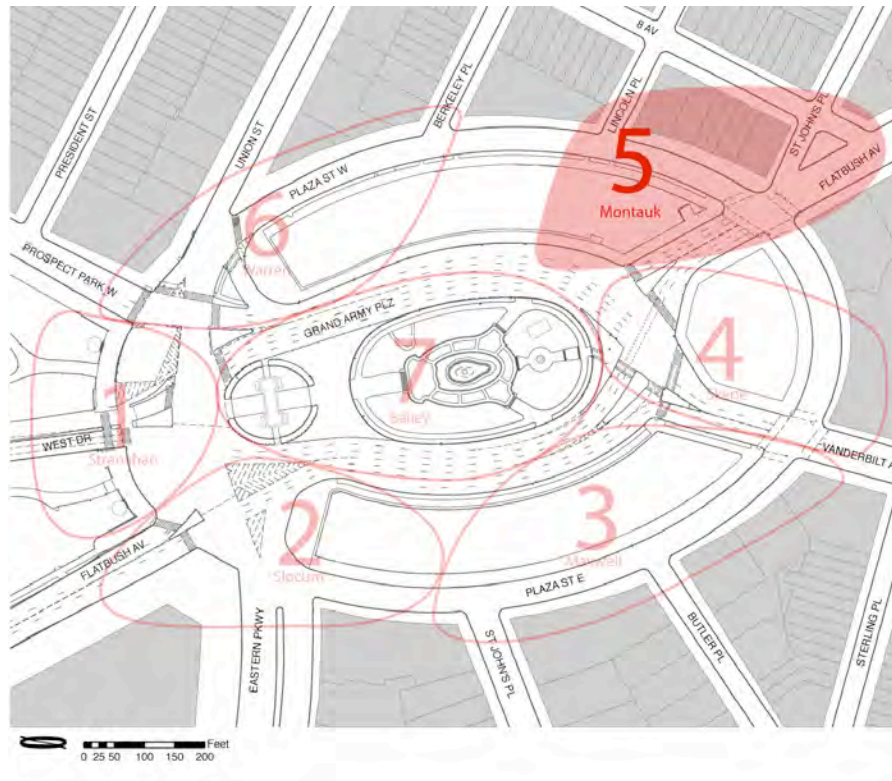


# VISION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Prospect Park Alliance
- Parks Department
- DOT
- CB6, CB8
- BIDS (North Flatbush and Vanderbilt Avenues)
  - Activate space to draw customers to their businesses
  - Involve local merchants to fund information kiosk and directory of locations; contribute to upkeep
- Residents' participation in berm maintenance



# STUDY AREA 5



- Flatbush Avenue, St. John's Place, Plaza Street West to Berkeley Place
- Part of northern gateway to Grand Army Plaza
- Subway station



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- Potential
- Scale of the area
- Lots of trees
- Quiet area
- Great architecture
- Good transit connections and accessibility
- Greatest sensory element: the traffic noise and volume
- St Johns/Flatbush/8<sup>th</sup> Avenue junction is very unsafe
- Orientation is to the outer ring, nothing draws people into the circle
- Signage
- Newsstand by subway is an eyesore
- Frequent use of Plaza Street bike lane by cars
- Inner circle unused by public
- Berms filthy, not well tended



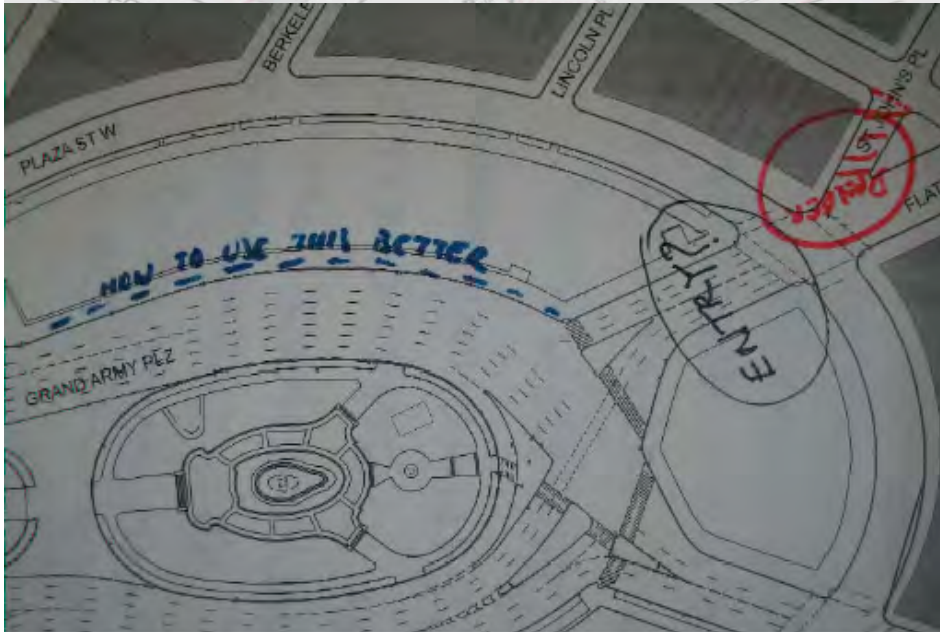
# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- Open up the berm
  - Residents must assume sense of ownership about the berm, esp. its upkeep
  - Improve signage, create a sense of entry to local destinations
  - Better benches: current ones are clunky, not comfortable or inviting to sit on
  - Improve the kiosk at the subway station, perhaps as a **cafe or shake shack**
  - Remove ads from subway
- Introduce a greater commercial element
  - Create a portal/entry to Prospect Park from the north (Flatbush Ave/subway)
    - For further thinking: how do we improve this as a visible entry point and orientation to the park?
  - Re-route the traffic through this area
  - Close St. Johns Place between 8<sup>th</sup> Ave and Flatbush

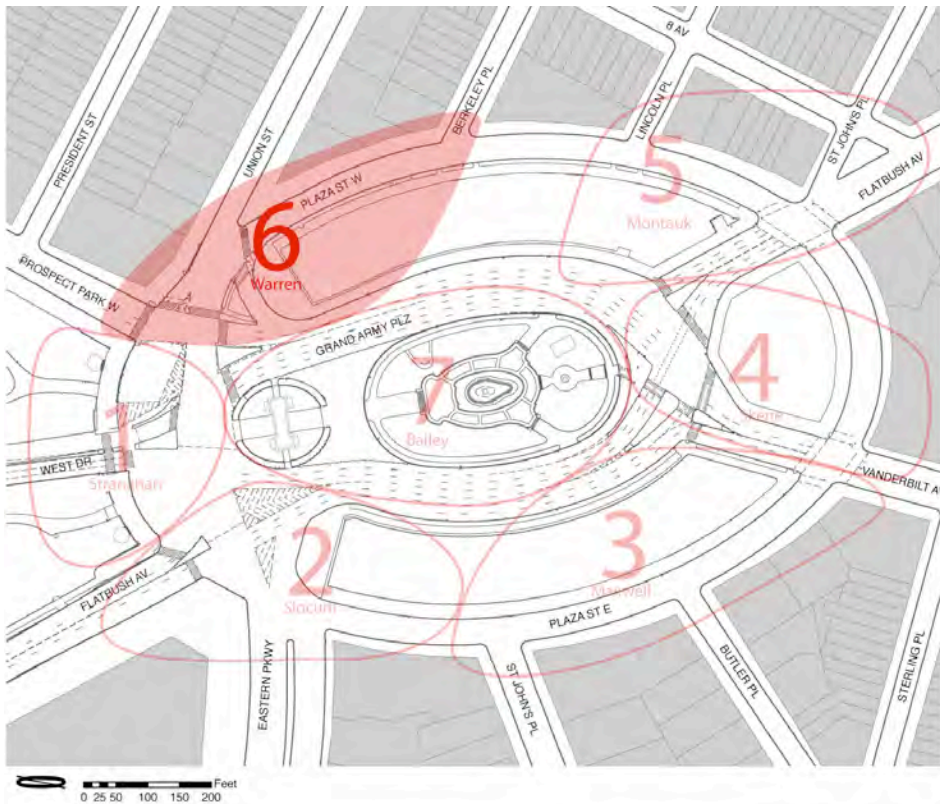


# VISION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Montauk Club
- Flatbush Avenue businesses
- Co-op boards
- Expand the Greenmarket presence
  - Have it run on more days
- Introduce a market-based restaurant (Al di La, Garden Cafe)
- “Gotta have park” as a catalyst for local resident ownership



# STUDY AREA 6



- Plaza Street West from Berkeley Place to Prospect Park West
- Inside of west berm



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- Berkeley Place and Plaza Street are quiet and peaceful
- Historic significance of the area
- Potential to be a great public space and to connect plaza
- The corner at Prospect Park West is an attractive ceremonial entrance to the park
- The Greenmarket
- South end of the berm has potential as a social space
- Crossing from Greenmarket to Plaza Street difficult at best
- Senior Center needs access
- Union Street traffic
- Greenmarket disconnected from rest of plaza
- Cyclist access very poor
- Highway signage and lamppost aren't contextual; pedestrian signage is poor
- Statue area is unkempt and unused; the statue seems dishonored
- Bus stop is not safe at night



# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- Install restroom
- Enlarge/integrate market space; connect Arch and Greenmarket
- Improve bike/ped/transit access
- Traffic-calm this area; close off-ramp; connect statue area with island; install bulb-outs
- Increase seating and greenery
- Open up the berm
- Better way-finding system
- Chess tables, other activities

- Union Street
  - Turn into greenway linking Park to future Brooklyn Bridge Park and Brooklyn Greenway
  - Close westbound Union Street; make it one-way
  - Make Prospect Park West two-way
- Re-think the berms
- Take back some of the traffic lanes in inner circle
- Parked cars inside the area could calm traffic
- Greenery, planters

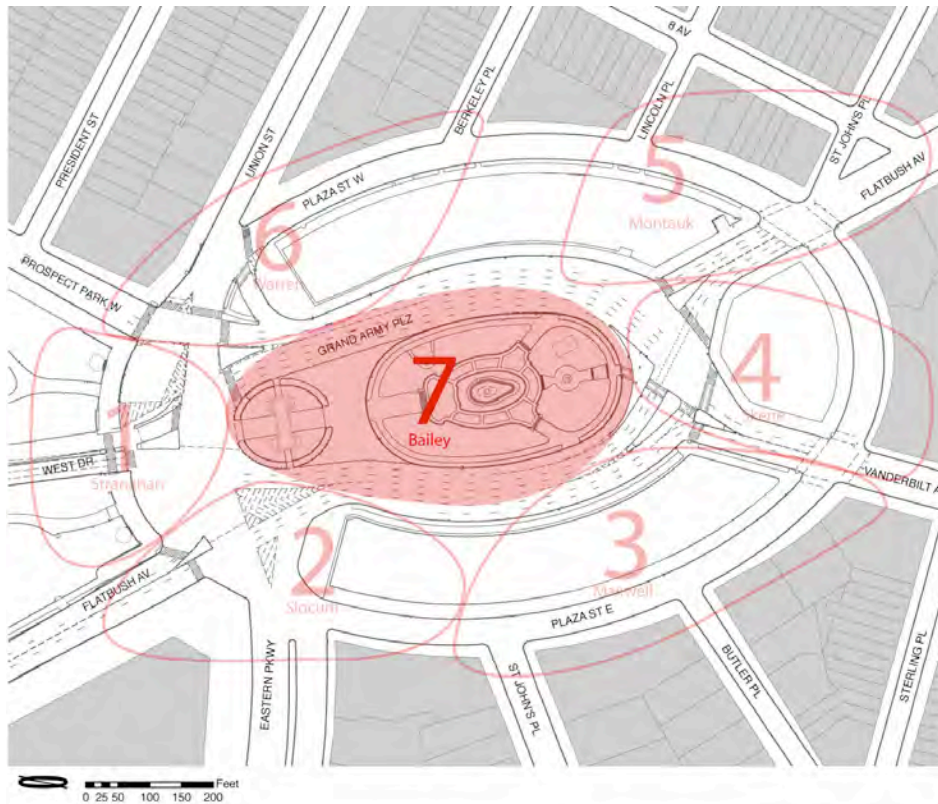


# PARTNERSHIPS AND VISION

- Encourage local groups to maintain berm and additional greenery by bus stops along Grand Army Plaza



# STUDY AREA 7



- Inner circle
- Arch, Bailey Fountain, and an at-grade separation between them



# POSITIVES / NEGATIVES

- Quiet, majestic, grand area; like the feel
  - Architecture and beauty of the Arch and fountain
  - Monumental scale; **historic value**
  - Lighting this winter helped activate the area
  - Could be a **grand entrance** and promenade to Prospect Park
  - Open space, **trees**
  - View corridor down Vanderbilt Avenue
- **Accessibility**; no connection to side streets and poor connections with Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park
  - Often empty except for wedding parties; doesn't feel safe



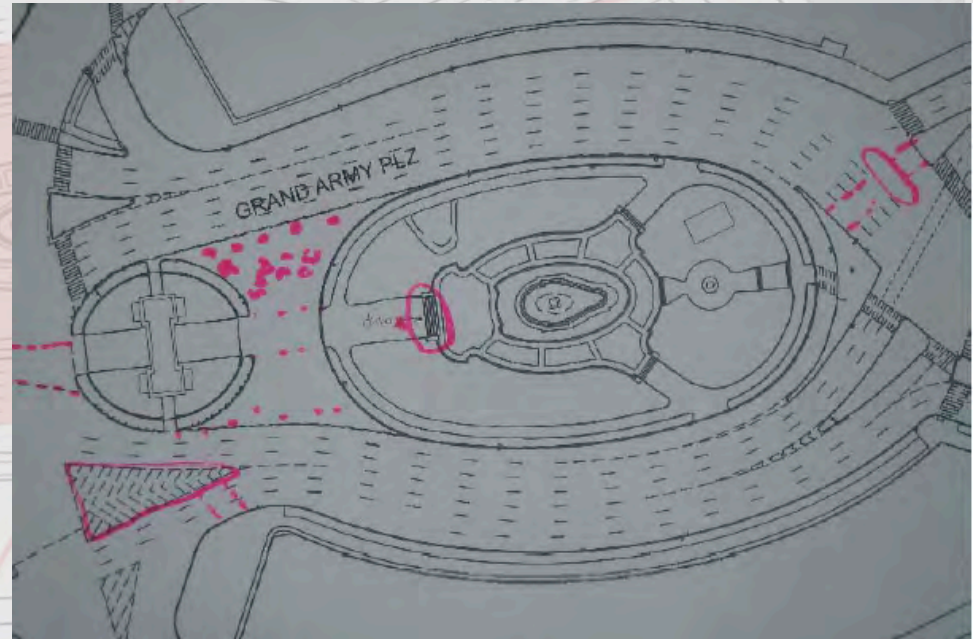
# SHORT-TERM / LONG-TERM

- Narrow the space between the Arch; add **different paving**
- **More connections** - traffic light, crosswalks
- **Orientation maps**
- More lighting and **seating**; **flowers** inside fountain area
- Drinking fountain
- **Increase programming**; activity tables for chess or other games
- **Clean out trash, dead leaves**
- **Close Prospect Park to cars**
- Close one side of inner-circle lanes to traffic and make the other side two-way; change lanes in Plaza to reflect input/output streets
- “Drive less” campaign
- Add permanent art piece to show African-American contribution to Civil War
- **Restrooms**
- Open new 2/3 subway entrance in circle center
- **Flatbush Avenue BRT**
- Look at traffic speeds from streets feeding into the Plaza



# PARTNERSHIPS AND VISION

- BIDs
- Civic organizations
- Cultural organizations



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