

STAFF RECOMMENDATION



C. Hart
NCPC File No. 7164

STREET CLOSING

WATER STREET, SW AND PORTIONS OF 7TH, 9TH AND N STREETS, SW
AND M PLACE, SW ADJACENT TO SQUARES 390, 391, W471 AND W473
(S.O. 10-15906)

Southwest, Washington, DC

Submitted by the District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor

October 28, 2010

Abstract

The District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor proposes to close Water Street, SW and portions of 7th, 9th and N Streets and M Place, SW adjacent to Squares 390, 391, W-471 and W-473. The Office of the Surveyor's submission included a proposed development plan for the Southwest Waterfront and according to the designs currently being developed, these street closings are necessary for the proposed development to occur. The portion of Water Street, SW and the small portions of the other street to be closed equal approximately 274,420 square feet, or 6.2 acres, of land.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of comments to the Council of the District of Columbia pursuant to D.C. Code § 9-202.02.

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Advises the Council of the District of Columbia that the closing of Water Street, SW and portions of 7th Street, 9th Street, N Street and M Place, SW would not adversely affect the identified federal interests based on the following:

- This portion of Water Street, SW was not considered a contributing factor when the L'Enfant Plan was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- This portion of Water Street, SW no longer serves as a functional street.

- The developer has agreed to maintain service access to Maine Lobsterman Park, a National Park Service property, and public access to the waterfront along the bulkhead.
- The House of Representatives is reviewing legislation to transfer the land delineated as the Southwest Waterfront Project Site to the District of Columbia, which includes Water Street, SW.

Recommends that the District of Columbia continue working with NCPC staff to address the Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force’s September 29, 2010 comments on the Southwest Waterfront plan regarding the maintenance of reciprocal views and the need to strengthen pedestrian connections between the Southwest Waterfront and the 10th Street corridor.

* * *

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

Water Street, SW is accessed off of Maine Avenue, SW the main connection to the Southwest Waterfront, an existing, active boating community with several marinas. The Maine Avenue Fish Market is also located on the northwestern portion of the waterfront area and is the oldest continuously operating fish market in the United States. In addition, the National Park Service has two parks in this area, Maine Lobsterman Park and the Titanic Memorial.

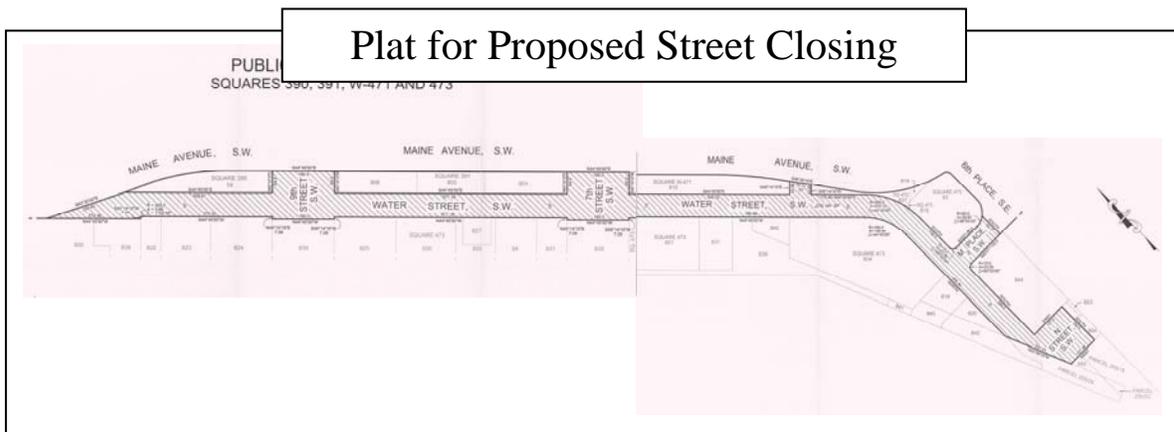
Since Pierre L’Enfant’s Plan for the City of Washington was created over 200 years ago, several visions have evolved for the Southwest waterfront area from commercial port to urban redevelopment to a mixed-use destination. Although Water Street, SW is included in the L’Enfant Plan and is federally owned, the dredging and filling efforts as part of the improvements to the Washington Channel in the 1880’s and the urban renewal plans from the 1960’s have changed this part of the District including how Water Street, SW is configured and functions. Because of the changes Water Street, SW was not included as a contributing factor to the L’Enfant Plan when it was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places.





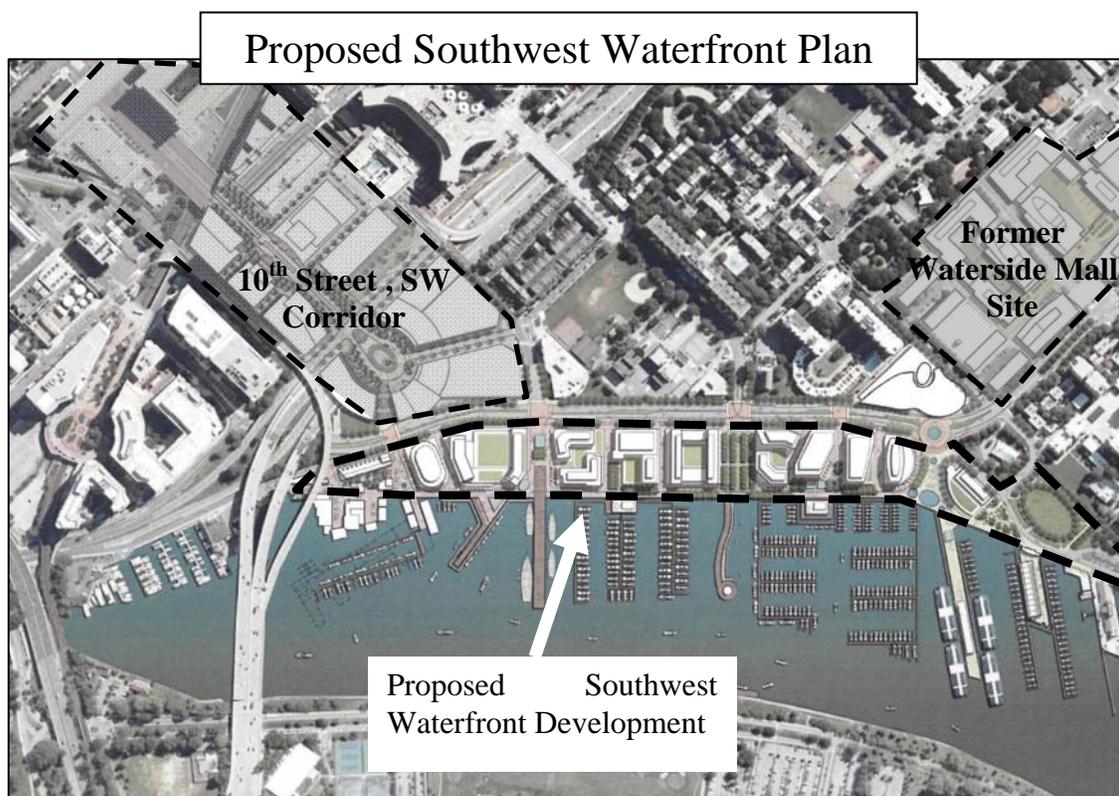
Proposal

The District of Columbia Office of the Surveyor has proposed closing Water Street, SW and portions of 7th, 9th and N Streets and M Place, SW adjacent to Squares 390, 391, W-471 and W-473. The Office of the Surveyor’s submission included additional documents outlining the development proposal for the Southwest waterfront that includes the closing of Water Street, SW. and portions of other adjacent streets for redevelopment purposes. The portion of Water Street, SW and the small portions of other streets to be closed equal approximately 274,420 square feet or 6.2 acres of land.



Proposed Southwest Waterfront Development

PN Hoffman and Struever Brothers Eccles & Rouse jointly submitted a development proposal to the District of Columbia for this area under name the Hoffman-Struever Waterfront, LLC. This joint development team was selected by the District of Columbia's Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development in 2006. The Council of the District of Columbia approved Hoffman-Struever Waterfront as the developer for the Southwest Waterfront in July 2008 and the final Amended and Revised Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) was signed in May 2009. The LDA includes a provision requiring the closing of Water Street, SW to enable the waterfront development to occur.



In May 2010, Madison Marquette became major partner for the development along with PN Hoffman. Hoffman-Madison Marquette Waterfront, LLC submitted plans for the redevelopment of 26 acres of land along the waterfront that includes residential uses (both condominium and rental, including 30% devoted to affordable housing) as well as office, retail cultural and hotel uses with a total of approximately 2,701,000 square feet of gross floor area and buildings up to 130 feet in height according to the development website. The development is anticipated to be constructed in phases with portions of the proposed buildings and some public spaces to be constructed on the closed street.

Proposed Southwest Waterfront Model



Proposed Southwest Waterfront Sketches



City Pier



The Wharf

Included in the design is an enhanced public realm with a redesigned fish market, first floor retail both along Maine Avenue, SW and the waterfront side, marinas, several plazas and a waterfront walk that links the full length of the proposed development.

Promote the development of the Southwest Waterfront in the District of Columbia (H.R. 5544)

In June 2010, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton introduced legislation that would transfer parcels located within the Southwest Waterfront development area, which includes Water Street, SW to the District of Columbia government. This legislation is currently under review by a subcommittee in the House of Representatives.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

Staff has identified several federal interests associated with this street closing including its potential as a historic resource; its functionality as part of the urban system of streets; its impact on public access to federal parkland; and its relationship to pending legislation. Staff has reviewed the Water Street, SW (formerly Maine Avenue, SW) closing and the proposed development included with the submittal and finds that it will not impact any identified federal interests.

Staff has also reviewed the concept development plans provided with the street closing and notes several federal interests that should be addressed as these plans are further developed. The identified federal interests are

- providing connectivity between Banneker Park and the waterfront as envisioned in the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*
- preserving views between Banneker Park, the waterfront and East Potomac Park as envisioned in the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*

Water Street, SW

Although Water Street, SW was included in the Plan of the City of Washington, also known as the L'Enfant Plan, it was realigned as part of urban renewal plans in the 1960s, and it was not considered a contributing factor when the L'Enfant Plan was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In a staff report dated September 23, 2010, the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) stated that “the portions of streets that are proposed for closing have been compromised by realignment, truncation or widening, and no longer retain sufficient integrity to be considered contributing elements of the landmark Plan of the City of Washington.” The HPRB staff report concludes that the HPRB does not object, however recommends that “historic L'Enfant views and vistas be extended into the redevelopment area wherever possible.”

Water Street, SW has also lost its integrity as a functioning street as it is separated from and parallel to Maine Avenue, SW and it has a cul-de-sac on either end.

The urban renewal and redevelopment plans since the 1960s have maintained and enhanced public access to the waterfront and NPS property along the waterfront. There are two NPS parks adjacent to this street closing. One of the parks, Maine Lobsterman Park, is located south of Water Street, SW in Square 474 lot 819 and is across from where M Place, SW is to be closed. The other park, Titanic Memorial is accessible by maintenance staff on both Water Street, SW and P Street, SW. The developer recently met with representatives of NPS and agreed to maintain service access to this park through an easement and would work with all the land owners to develop a new public access agreement once Water Street, SW is demolished for the new development.

Public access along the water is also important and has been described in several recent planning documents including the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, the Monumental Core Framework Plan and has been an integral part of the Southwest Waterfront development proposal reviewed along with this street closing. The development will be referred by the Zoning Commission to NCPC and reviewed separately as a planned unit development in the future.

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton has introduced legislation in the House of Representatives to transfer in the Southwest Waterfront Project Area to the District of Columbia. This legislation includes this portion of Water Street, SW and is still in the subcommittee.

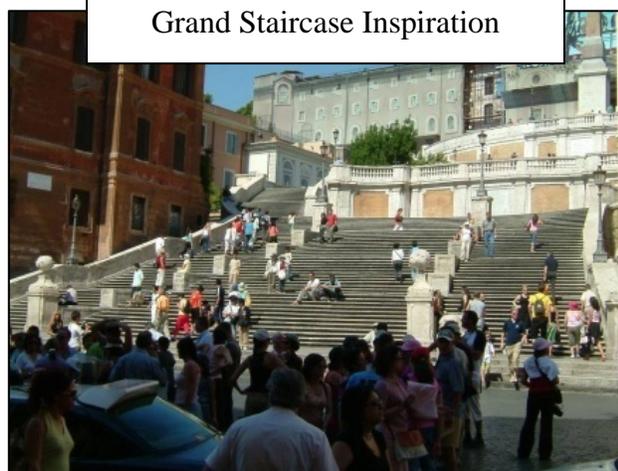
After reviewing identified federal interests above, and finding no adverse impacts, staff recommends to the Commission that it **advise the Council of the District of Columbia that the closing of Water Street, SW and portions of 7th Street, 9th Street, N Streets and M Place, SW would not adversely affect the identified federal interests based on the following:**

- **The street was not considered a contributing factor when the L’Enfant Plan was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places.**
- **This portion of Water Street, SW no longer serves as a functional street.**
- **The developer has agreed to maintain service access to Maine Lobsterman Park, a National Park Service property, and public access to the waterfront along the bulkhead.**
- **The House of Representatives is reviewing legislation to transfer the land delineated as the Southwest Waterfront Project Site to the District of Columbia, which includes Water Street, SW.**

Monumental Core Framework Plan and Southwest Waterfront Development Plan

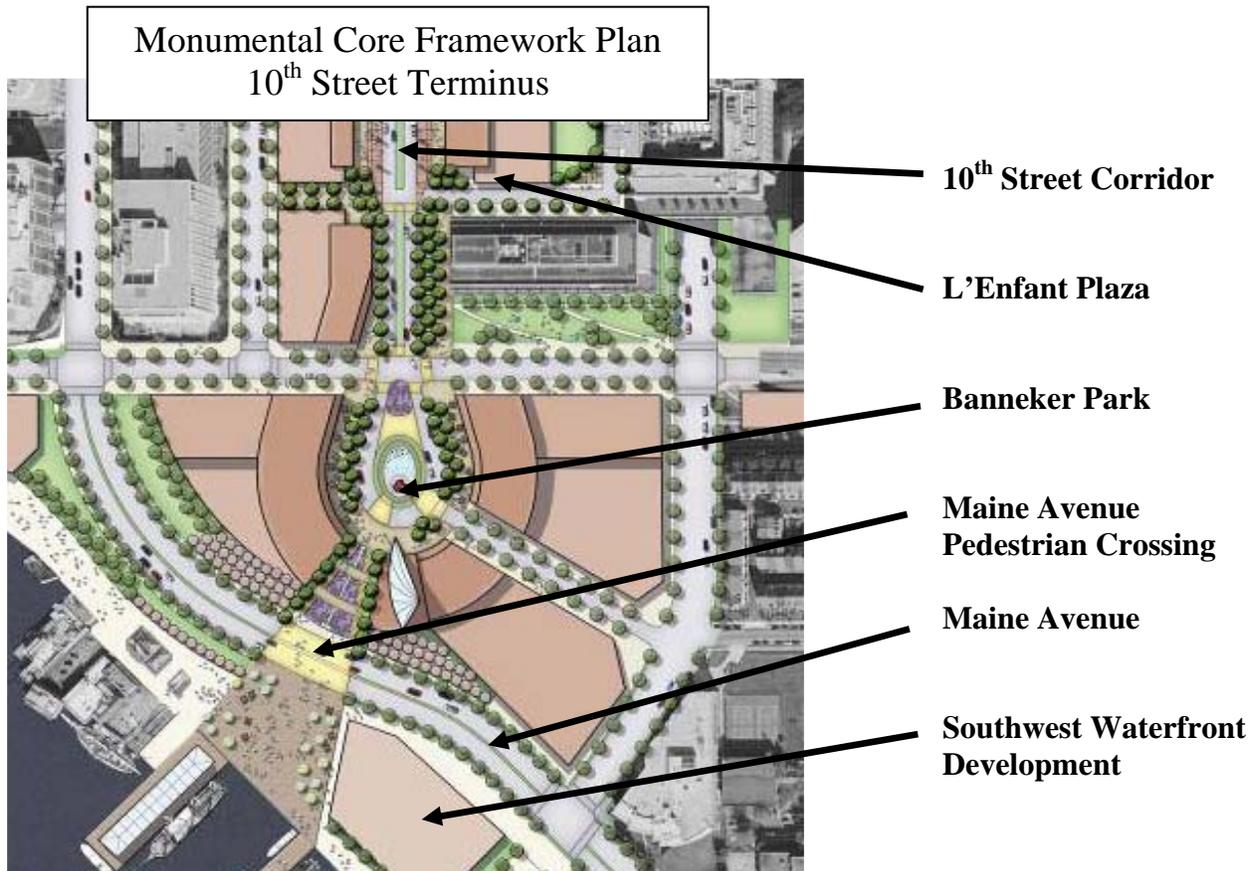
The Southwest Waterfront is one of the precincts included in the Framework Plan to improve connectivity between the neighborhood surrounding the National Mall and the Mall itself. One of the key transitions for this neighborhood in the plan is the Benjamin Banneker Park with connections both visual and physical being paramount to ensure the vitality of both the reimagined 10th Street, SW corridor and the Southwest Waterfront area.

The main physical connection between the reinvigorated waterfront and 10th Street, SW was envisioned as “...a grand terraced staircase connecting the 10th Street Overlook to the waterfront” which the plan says “...can become an important civic feature as well.” Over the past two years, staff has worked collaboratively with the developer to review the southwest waterfront development

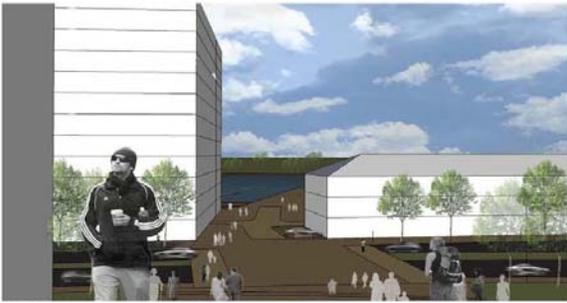


Scalinata della Trinità dei Monti (Spanish Steps)
Rome, Italy

proposal to ensure that the major connection between the waterfront area and Banneker Park identified and envisioned in the plan is not lost.



Banneker Park Viewshed Analysis



Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force view study



Currently proposed view

Banneker Park Reciprocal Views from Southwest Waterfront



Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force view study



Currently proposed view

Views to and from the overlook at Banneker Park are also an important aspect of the connection between the 10th Street, SW corridor and the Southwest Waterfront given the location and topography of the site – 44 feet above Maine Avenue, SW. The *Monumental Core Framework Plan* states “...as the threshold to the Washington Channel, these terraces will be well-traveled, offering a unique opportunity for commemoration and providing sweeping views of the river and [East] Potomac Park.” View studies have been conducted by both the SW Ecodistrict Task Force and the developer to understand massing, connectivity, and potential views.

On September 29, 2010, Hoffman-Madison Marquette representatives briefed the Southwest Ecodistrict (formerly 10th Street) Task Force on the proposed waterfront plans. Staff provided an overview of the basis for the Framework Plan’s recommendations, concentrating on the overlook at Banneker Park and the importance of the visual and physical connection between Banneker Park and the waterfront and East Potomac Park. The Task Force expressed support for the overall project; however, many members of the Task Force expressed concerns with the current configuration of buildings and the design of the public space between the overlook at Banneker Park and Washington Channel. Staff will need to continue to meet with the developer’s architect to address the Task Force’s concerns.

As the conceptual design includes proposed buildings at 130 feet in height along the Southwest Waterfront, staff notes that views from Banneker Park toward the water are important and these views need to be preserved as much as possible. Therefore staff recommends that the Commission **recommends that the District of Columbia continue working with NCPC staff to address the Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force's September 29, 2010 comments on the Southwest Waterfront plan regarding the maintenance of reciprocal views and the need to strengthen pedestrian connections between the Southwest Waterfront and the 10th Street corridor.**

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

This project is not inconsistent with the Historic Plan of Washington, D.C. policies in the Historic Preservation Element of the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. In particular the proposal to close Water Street, SW will not adversely affect the integrity of the L'Enfant Plan.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its September 15, 2010 meeting and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with all participating agencies, except NCPC. The representative for NCPC withheld coordination to determine how the development proposal for this project interacts with the work of the Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force. The participating agencies were the General Services Administration; the District Department of Transportation; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services; the National Park Service; the General Services Administration and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Subsequent to this meeting, staff has determined that additional coordination has occurred and is recommending future coordination to address issues raised by the Southwest Ecodistrict Task Force regarding views and strengthening the pedestrian connection across Maine Avenue, SW.