

Potomac Park Levee System EA
 Summary of Public Comments & Responses

No	Commentor	Comment	NPS Response
1	Lindsley Williams	As the EA notes (at page 2-43), of all the “remaining diagonal vistas” that L’Enfant’s plan provided, Virginia Avenue northwest of the site of the levee closure is the only one that survives at this time relevant to this project. I recommend that asset be examined carefully so that the north-south placement of the post-and-panel wall and the two symmetric flanking arc walls be centered not only on the axis of 17th Street but also on the axis of Virginia Avenue as it was laid out by L’Enfant to the northwest, the latter axis terminating at the “Jefferson Pier” southwest of the site and due west of the Washington Monument.	The placement of the levee abutment walls and post and panel closure resulted from extensive consultation with the NPS, DC Historic Preservation Officer, Commission of Fine Arts, and NCPC. The opening between the walls is in fact laid out symmetrically about the central Axis of Virginia Avenue. The preservation of diagonal vistas, particularly from Virginia Avenue, as well as the avoidance of adverse impacts to trees and vegetation along 17 th Street, were primary factors in the design, placement, and alignment of the 17 th Street closure structure.
2	Lindsley Williams	From the EA, it seems that the overall opening would be 140 feet, presumably meaning 70 feet either side of the mid-point centered on axis of the 17th Street right of way and, I recommend, that of Virginia Avenue as well.	Many factors were taken into account in designing the placement, width, and alignment of the levee structure, both in the distance south of Constitution Avenue as well as the setback to the east and west of 17 th Street.
3	Lindsley Williams	The final design should consider the tradeoff between an opening of greater width, its benefit to the viewshed and vistas, and the reduced cost of cladding the permanent wall.	<p>First, the setback to the south from Constitution Avenue was determined by the topography in the project area. The further south the walls were located, the greater the height of the walls. Yet, the higher the walls, the greater the impact on views and vistas. Secondly, a greater setback to the east and west from 17th Street (and consequently, a wider opening) resulted in more open views looking north on 17th Street towards the Ellipse. Yet, a greater width opening required more extensive re-grading and landscaping which resulting in a greater tree loss in the project area.</p> <p>Additionally, the greater the opening, the more post and panel would be required. The post and panel is the most expensive component of the levee system which also requires manpower in order to be erected. Based upon the required erection time per panel, the anticipated crews that would be available, and the amount of advance notice assumed during a flood emergency, as well as the potential weather conditions that such crews might have to work in, the NPS was not comfortable expanding the width of the opening.</p> <p>The balance of the loss of trees against the preservation of views and vistas was carefully considered in the design process. Alternative 1B reflects the best compromise of reducing or avoiding adverse impacts to all resource areas. It also incorporates the maximum amount of the temporary post and panel closure system that the NPS feels could be reasonably installed given the size of their workforce and the conditions that workforce may have to work in.</p>
4	Lindsley Williams	From my examination of historic records, I know that the Virginia Avenue right of way northwest of Constitution Avenue is 120 feet. I have also collected and extrapolated data on the east-west and north-south distance this right of way utilizes. From my math (which used lengths stated of	See final response to comment #1/2.

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		the sides of the triangle formed at Reservation 108) and is subject to correction, I find that the overall east-west width would be just under 211 feet (instead of 140), or about 105.5 (instead of 70) feet east and west of the centerline. Ideally, then, the post and panel system would be made that full width, but that is likely not feasible due to cost and other considerations.	
5	Lindsley Williams	Place suitable “monuments” along the two arc walls above their cap showing where the overall right of way of Virginia Avenue would have passed had that Avenue ever been developed across the Mall.	As part of the consultations with the DC SHPO and in response to comments received by the Commission of Fine Arts, the design of the exposed arc walls is purposeful in its simplicity in order to best fit into the cultural landscapes. Unfortunately “monuments” along the wall to indicate Virginia Avenue’s historic right of way would not be in keeping with character of the proposed flood walls.
6	Flood Control America (FCA)	Use of an Invisible Flood Control Wall (IFCW) would eliminate the high profile/sight restricting earth levee. By using the IFCW for the closure and extending it back up the slope on both sides, the objectionable sight restrictions are basically eliminated, since the wall profile is only in place during a flood event.	See attached revised errata. USACE provided a response on 3/24/09
7	FCA	IFCW would also eliminate the proposed embankments and the dramatic tree removal and replacement landscaping would be unnecessary.	See attached revised errata. USACE provided a response on 3/24/09
8	Committee of 100	The National Capital Framework Plan, which has been prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission, is noted on page 1-19. However, the timing of the plan should be checked. Most recently, a Draft National Capital Framework Plan was released on July 10, 2008 for a ninety-day public comment period. The final plan is being prepared.	See attached revised errata
9	Committee of 100	The “Committee of 100” is noted on pages 5-2 and 5-4 of the Environmental Assessment. The “Committee of 100” is generally well known. However, there are other organizations with the “Committee of 100” name. We would therefore appreciate if our organization’s full name could be used in the report: The Committee of 100 on the Federal City.	See attached revised errata
10	NCSOM	Please note that on 5-4, the name of our organization is the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, not “the Mall.”	See attached revised errata
11	Charles Karpowicz	The Summary should also describe the overall federal government flood control project here which is titled: “Washington, D.C. and Vicinity Flood Protection Project”, in which the West Potomac Park Levee is a portion of that project.	Since emphasis is intended to be placed on the Potomac Park Levee in the EA, references to other parts of the Levee system were omitted. However, page 1-19 of the EA refers to the Washington, D.C., and vicinity flood control projects including projects that are not analyzed in the Potomac Park EA.
12	Charles Karpowicz	Considering that critical business and government property and operations including the Metro subway system would be greatly damaged from flooding above the 100-year event, the 500-year or greater flood should be selected as the project design flood.	FEMA requires levee design to protect against a 100 year event. USACE requires compliance with the congressionally authorized solution, a flow of 700,000cfs which is comparable to and exceeds a 500-year flooding event. Alternative 1B has been designed to meet the congressionally authorized rate of flow

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13	Charles Karpowicz	“no action alternative does satisfy the FEMA requirement ...” contradicts the Corps of Engineer’s official rating of Unacceptable [unsafe] & the need for modification of this project. Please elaborate what is meant by this.	The no action alternative at the Reflecting Pool Levee satisfies the height required for protection against the 100-year event. The USACE de-certified the method of closure at the 17 th Street project location only.
14	Charles Karpowicz	I do not know what is meant by, “north edge of the Reflecting Pool Levee”.	See attached revised errata