2.0

ALTERNATIVES

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2.1 Introduction

This EA addresses a full range of alternative actions related to the proposed permanent perimeter security elements for the Lafayette Building. Three alternatives are evaluated within this EA, two action alternatives and a No Action Alternative. GSA developed Perimeter Security Alternative A between 2006 and 2007 to address its goals for permanent security measures at the Lafayette Building in response to its risk assessment prepared according to Interagency Security Committee (ISC) criteria. Although NCPC is not the action agency with responsibility for implementing the perimeter security project, NCPC staff developed Perimeter Security Alternative B for evaluation within this EA. The alternatives are described below.

2.2 Perimeter Security Alternative A

Perimeter Security Alternative A includes a combination of bollards, bollard benches, bollard planters, and hardened streetlights. The bollards would be trapezoidal in shape, sheathed in dark granite, 12" in diameter, 39" high, and spaced four feet apart on center. Along Vermont Avenue, bollards, alternating with granite bollard benches, would serve as the primary security elements, with planters framing the main entrance. The security elements would be placed between the sidewalk and the roadway, parallel to the curb. The bollards would vary in distance from the curb, but would be no closer than two feet. Every effort would be made to preserve existing trees along Vermont Avenue; however, if they do not survive construction, new trees would be planted in their places. Seven additional street trees in tree panels would be added between the sidewalk and the curb. The security line would follow the current Vermont Avenue curb line before turning east along I Street. The security line would turn the corner at H Street, outlining the existing wide curved sidewalk.

On H Street, NW three street trees in tree panels would be located along the edge of the sidewalk, and a line of heavy granite bollards would connect the three tree panels. Retractable bollards would be employed across the garage entrance on H Street, NW where a security check point would be added. The five off-peak parking spaces on the north side of H Street between the corner of Vermont Avenue and the entrance to the garage would be eliminated and a queuing lane for vehicles entering the garage would be installed.

On 15th Street, NW a line of bollards and bollard benches would be placed at the center of the sidewalk to define an outdoor seating area for use by customers of the nearby retail establishments. On the outside of the security elements, five small shade trees in planting beds would mirror the line of elm trees at the curb. The vegetation within the beds would partially shield the security elements from view and create a green security line consistent with the placement of the planters and seating areas in front of the Sofitel Hotel to the south. At the north end of the block, the bollards would curve around the corner to meet the existing curb line on I Street.

At the alley entrance on 15th Street, a line of retractable bollards would be employed and a guard station would be installed within the existing building just north of the alley. The existing three

off-peak parking spaces north of the alley would be eliminated, and a truck screening area would be established. Trucks making deliveries to the Sofitel Hotel or the Lafayette Building would be required to pass through a security check prior to entering the public alley on 15th Street, NW. Security checks would last approximately seven to ten minutes. After being screened, the trucks would back up to access the alley entrance to the south. The majority of these trucks would exit the alley onto 15th Street once their delivery is complete. Generally one truck could be in the alley at a given time.

On I Street, NW, a line of granite bollards would connect the four tree panels. At the northwest corner of the building, the bollards would turn to follow the line along Vermont Avenue.

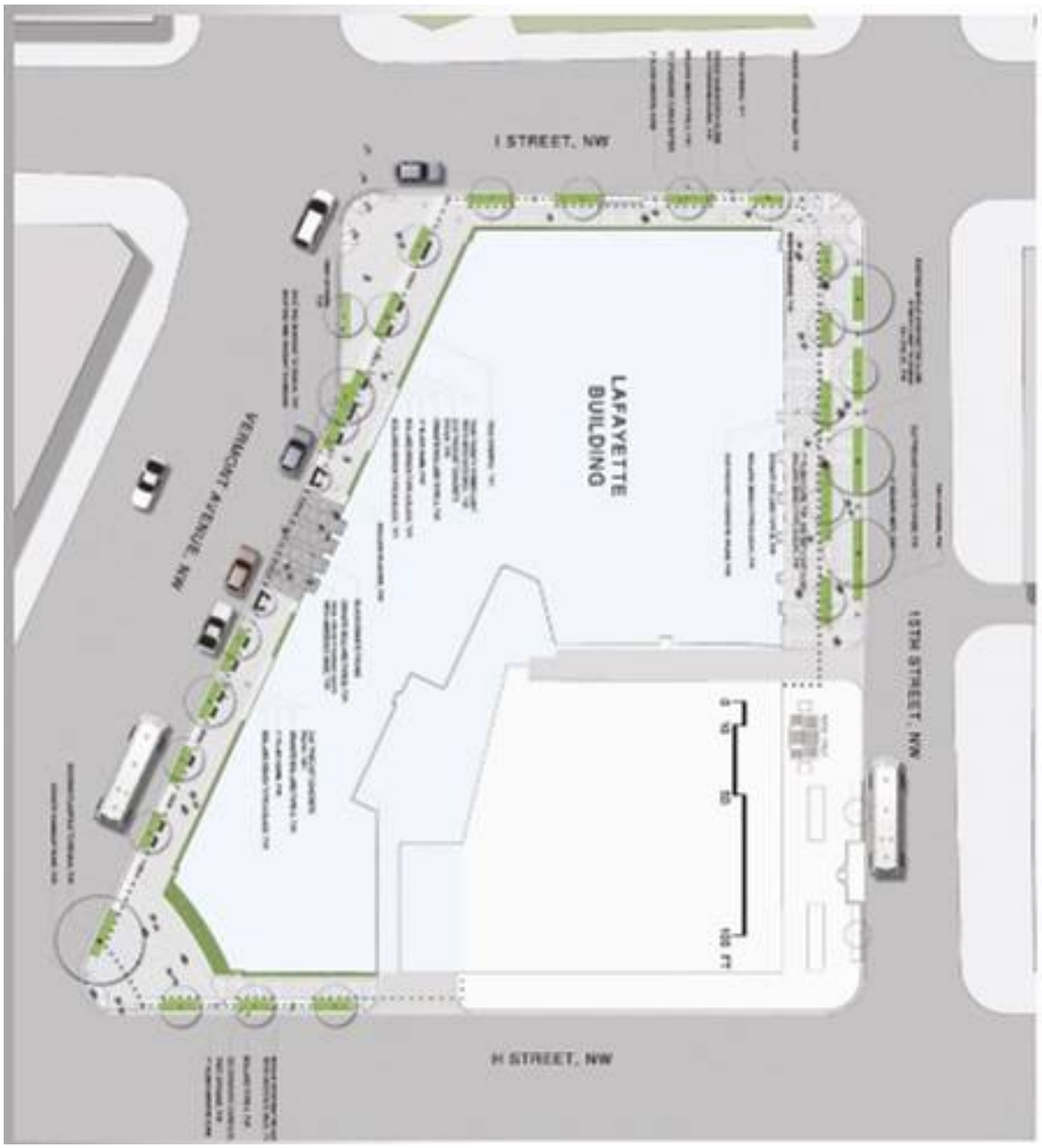

Figure 2-1
Perimeter Security Alternative A

2.3 Perimeter Security Alternative B

Perimeter Security Alternative B was developed to include both physical security elements and improvements to the landscape and scale of the streetscape through sidewalk widening, changes to barrier height, spacing, and mass, and enhancement of the public realm. Bollard height, diameter, and spacing are based on a system developed by the Smithsonian Institution to meet ISC criteria for "Medium" level buildings. Further testing of the system may be required to verify that it meets those criteria. On Vermont Avenue, the sidewalk width would be increased from 19' to 40', to align it with the axis of the diagonal path through McPherson Square and the sidewalk on the east side of Vermont Avenue north of McPherson Square. The sidewalk on I Street would be widened from 18' to 25', to align it with the sidewalk on I Street, NW in the block west of the Lafayette Building. The sidewalk on H Street, NW would be widened from 17' to 25'. There would be no changes to the sidewalk width on 15th Street, NW, which is approximately 36' wide.

Under this alternative, security elements would include bollards, hardened tree enclosures, hardened planters, and terrace walls. Bollards would be metal, six inches in diameter, and 30" high, and placed five feet apart on center. Tree enclosures would alternate with bollards, the bollards being placed approximately two feet from the curb line, except on 15th Street, where the terrace wall would be placed approximately 19' from the curb. Every effort would be made during construction to preserve the existing trees along Vermont Avenue; however, if they do not survive construction, new trees would be planted in their places. In addition, eight new street trees would be placed at the edge of the relocated curb, thereby forming a double row of trees. At the corner of Vermont Avenue and H Street, NW the bollards would cross the sidewalk, and the existing planting bed against the curved corner of the building would be enlarged to serve a security function.

On H Street, NW the existing trees would be replaced by three new street trees in tree panels placed along the edge of the new curb and spaced 40' apart on center. The security line would consist of bollards near the edge of the curb alternating with tree enclosures at the edge of the sidewalk. A line of retractable bollards would be installed across the entrance to the parking garage where a security check point would be added. The five off-peak parking spaces on the north side of H Street between the corner of Vermont Avenue and the entrance to the garage would be eliminated to expand the sidewalk, and a queuing lane for vehicles entering the garage would be installed in the northernmost travel lane.

On 15th Street, NW a terrace wall alternated with bollards would be placed at the center of the sidewalk to define an outdoor seating area for use by the retail establishments. Planting beds would be placed on the sidewalk side of the terrace wall, partially shielding the wall from view and creating a green security line consistent with the placement of the planters and seating area in front of the Sofitel Hotel to the south. At the north end of the block, the bollards would curve around the corner to meet the new curb line on I Street, established 25' from the face of the Lafayette Building.

At the alley entrance on 15th Street, a line of retractable bollards would be employed and a guard station would be installed within the existing building just north of the alley. The existing three

off-peak parking spaces north of the alley would be eliminated, and a truck screening area would be established. Trucks making deliveries to the Sofitel Hotel or the Lafayette Building would be required to pass through a security check prior to entering the public alley on 15th Street, NW. Security checks would last approximately seven to ten minutes. After being screened, the trucks would back up to access the alley entrance to the south. The majority of these trucks would exit the alley onto 15th Street once their delivery is complete. Generally one truck could be in the alley at a given time.

On I Street, NW four new street trees would be installed along the new curb line. The security line would consist of bollards near the edge of the curb alternating with tree enclosures at the edge of the sidewalk. At the northwest corner of the building, the bollards would turn to follow the new curb line approximately 40' from the face of the building.

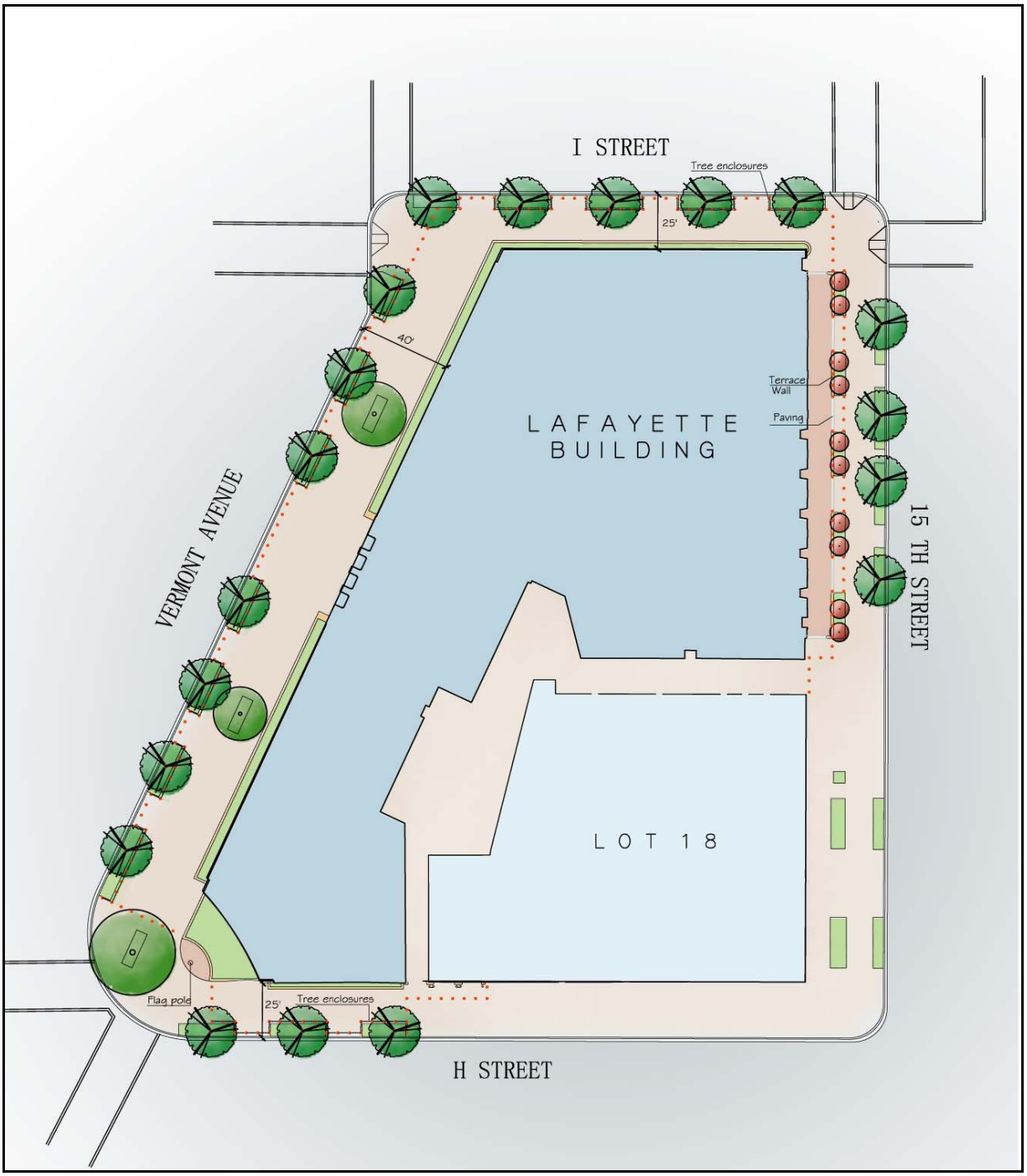

Figure 2-2
Perimeter Security Alternative B

2.4 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no perimeter security elements would be installed and the temporary planters placed at the Vermont Avenue entrance to the Lafayette Building would be removed. Trucks would continue to exit the alley by backing out onto 15th Street. The No Action Alternative would not meet the needs identified in GSA's risk assessment for the building.

To meet GSA's identified purpose and need for the project, alternative security measures would be necessary. Alternate security measures could include hardening the ground floor of the building to withstand impact, reconfiguring uses within the building to place sensitive activities away from the exterior, or placing restrictions on trucks and vehicular traffic on portions of adjacent streets. However, in most cases, these alternate security measures would have a greater overall impact on the environment.