

**THE SUITLAND PARKWAY
SOUTHERN AVENUE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
Southeast, Washington, DC**

Delegated Action of the Executive Director

September 2, 2004

Pursuant to delegations of authority adopted by the Commission on October 3, 1996, I approve the preliminary and final site development plans to construct new sidewalks and a replacement bridge, including all associated final site grading and landscaping, at the Suitland Parkway, as depicted on NCPC Map File No. 82.00(05.17)-41433.

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The Federal Highway Administration, Eastern Federal Lands Division, has submitted preliminary and final site development plans for constructing a replacement bridge on Southern Avenue at the Suitland Parkway that includes all site development features, the bridge structure, and necessary landscaping to complete the installation of a new bridge to cross over the Parkway.

The current metal girder bridge is structurally unstable due to existing girder web buckling on every column and deformation of the longitudinal stiffener plates. Moreover, the abutment of the existing bridge deck has lifted, resulting in road surface displacement.

The replacement bridge profile exhibits a flat parabolic curve similar to the existing bridge profile. The new bridge consists of prestressed concrete box girder spans with a concrete deck and four side-by-side concrete supporting piers that are placed, two each, near the quarter-length span of the new bridge. Metal roadway guardrails, adjacent to six-foot wide concrete sidewalks, are located at each side of the bridge deck. The box girders would be light beige finished concrete with the cantilevered sidewalks which have a six-foot-high black metal picket fence at the outside edge. Washington Globe lighting, 14 feet in height, would be used to light the sidewalk at the bridge deck.

A faux precast stone finish is exhibited at the new abutment barrier walls along the Parkway. As shown on the plans, the outside spans of the bridge facing the travel lanes of the Suitland Parkway would feature, within the concrete, incised 20-inch wide by 22-inch high, block lettering at the center of the bridge stating: "Welcome to the Nation's Capital".

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the bridge replacement plans at its meeting on August 18, 2004, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all participating agencies.

The D.C. State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO) determined that the replacement bridge would have no adverse effect on the National Register qualities of the Suitland Parkway on July 30, 2004. Additionally, NCPC staff has reviewed the submission materials and found the proposed replacement bridge qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to NCPC's Environmental Procedures, at Section 8.

The Executive Director, in taking this action, notes to the Federal Highway Administration that this approval requires the removal of the incised letters on the span fascia. The letters forming the sign lack contrast and are placed high (20 feet) over the travel lanes of the Suitland Parkway, essentially removing the message from the view of vehicles which are traveling at a high rate of speed. Furthermore, the submitted bridge plans specify the re-siting of an adjacent large roadway sign stating "Welcome to Washington" that serves the same purpose. Discussion about deleting the lettering with the Eastern Federal Lands Division project representatives indicated the Park Service expressed similar concerns involving the span lettering and suggested removal of the letters also.

Patricia E. Gallagher, AICP
Executive Director