

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 6132



PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE SECURITY AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CONCEPT DESIGN

Pennsylvania Avenue between 15TH and 17TH Streets, NW, and
Jackson and Madison Places, NW
Washington, DC

Recommendation of the Interagency Security Task Force

March 12, 2003

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

The Interagency Security Task Force recommends adoption of the concept design plans pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8701 et. seq.).

Commission Action

The Commission:

- Adopts the concept design plans (security and landscape design) for Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House (between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, including Jackson and Madison Places), Washington DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.31(08.21)41140.
- Requests that the design concept be further developed to respect the need for security and the need to achieve the highest quality urban design. Specific design issues include:
- Determine if there should be demarcation of the pavement to delineate pedestrian movement and vehicular travel, including the Circulator, within the precinct.
- Further evaluating the setback of the outer bollard lines on 15th and 17th Streets to accommodate cueing vehicles and a drop-off location without interfering with the pedestrian crosswalk.
- Ensuring that historic and significant views and settings in this precinct are protected and enhanced to the maximum extent possible.

- Further defining the pavement structure to provide the desired surface appearance and texture while also satisfying structural support requirements.
- Delegates authority to the Executive Director to coordinate this concept design and GSA's perimeter security project in progress at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, without adversely impacting GSA's current construction schedule.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Revised 3/11/03
NCPC File No. 6132



PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE SECURITY AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CONCEPT DESIGN

Pennsylvania Avenue between 15TH and 17TH Streets, NW, and
Jackson and Madison Places, NW,
Washington, DC

Recommendation of the Interagency Security Task Force
March 6, 2003

Abstract

In May 2002, after reviewing design concepts prepared by four of the country's preeminent landscape architecture firms, the National Capital Planning Commission selected Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates to design a secure and beautiful landscaped civic space on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. Since October, the design team has met with adjacent property owners and many stakeholders to discuss the many operational requirements for this important place. This planning and design effort, which has been managed by the Interagency Security Task Force, has resulted in a functional and beautiful concept design.

The proposed concept design will replace the temporary security components on Pennsylvania Avenue and on Jackson and Madison Places (erected in 1995 after the Oklahoma City bombing); and it will improve the quality of President's Park. The concept design satisfies (existing) security requirements and improves the aesthetic quality of this public space with new landscaping, paving materials, and streetscape amenities, such as benches, lighting, and way-finding signage. It also allows for the operation of a secure transit vehicle, the Downtown Circulator.

Commission Action Requested

The Interagency Security Task Force recommends adoption of the concept design plans pursuant to the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8701 et. seq.).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

- **Adopts** the concept design plans (security and landscape design) for Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House (between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, including Jackson and Madison Places), Washington DC, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 1.31(08.21)41140;

- **Requests** that the design concept be further developed to respect the need for security and the need to achieve the highest quality urban design. Specific design issues include:
 - Providing appropriate demarcation of the pavement to delineate pedestrian movement and vehicular travel, including the Circulator, within the precinct.
 - Further evaluating the setback of the outer bollard lines on 15th and 17th Streets to accommodate cueing vehicles and a drop-off location without interfering with the pedestrian crosswalk.
 - Ensuring that historic and significant views and settings in this precinct are protected and enhanced to the maximum extent possible.
 - Further defining the pavement structure to provide the desired surface appearance and texture while also satisfying structural support requirements.
- *Delegates authority to the Executive Director to coordinate this concept design and GSA's perimeter security project in progress at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, without adversely impacting GSA's current construction schedule.*

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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Project Location

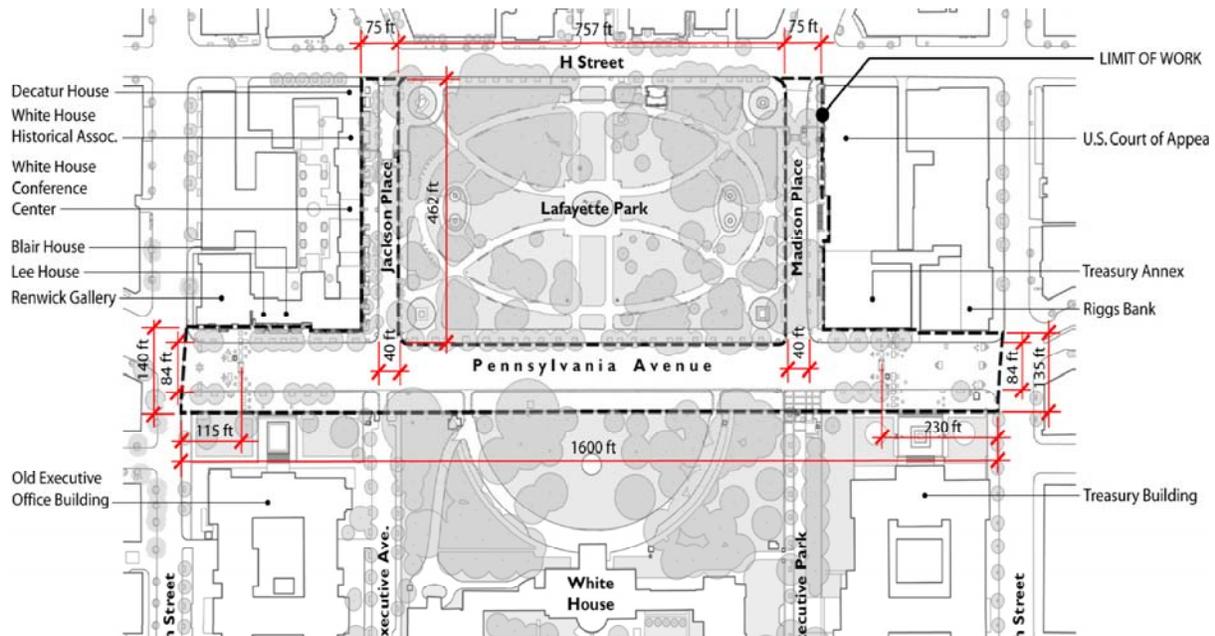
The proposed project is located in President's Park on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, between 15th and 17th Streets, NW, and includes both Jackson and Madison Places, adjacent to Lafayette Park. The project area encompasses:

Pennsylvania Avenue: the north and south sidewalks, excluding the north sidewalk adjacent to Lafayette Park (except for those areas necessary to integrate the proposed improvements within the adjacent roadway).

Madison Place: the east sidewalk, excluding the west sidewalk along Lafayette Park (except for those areas necessary to connect with the existing bollard line in Lafayette Park).

Jackson Place: the west sidewalk, excluding the east sidewalk along Lafayette Park (except for those areas necessary to connect with the existing bollard line in Lafayette Park).

Existing Conditions and Project Location



Background Summary

In May 1995, Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House was closed to public vehicular traffic. A White House security review concluded that no alternatives existed to ensure the protection of the President and others in the White House from explosive devices, except by prohibiting vehicular traffic on the Avenue. On November 1, 2001, after lengthy study and consideration, the National Capital Planning Commission adopted a report recommended by the Interagency Security Task Force, entitled “Designing for Security in the Nation’s Capital.” Based on legitimate security concerns, the report recommends that Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House remain closed to normal city traffic at this time. If in the future, there are major positive changes in the security environment and/or risk detection technology is improved to the satisfaction of the relevant government agencies, this recommendation will be reconsidered by the National Capital Planning Commission.

Recognizing that the present condition of the street and its crudely barricaded security checkpoints are unacceptable, the report recommended the immediate design and construction of a landscaped civic space along the Pennsylvania Avenue right-of-way in front of the White House to create a distinguished, pedestrian-oriented space appropriate for the nation’s capital. The recommendation also included the following general design and programmatic criteria:

- Respect and enhance the historic setting and views of the White House.
- Reflect a clear memory of Pennsylvania Avenue's historic use.
- Accommodate the staging of the Inaugural Parade.
- Accommodate the Downtown Circulator.
- Allow for the future reopening of the street to vehicular traffic.
- Allow for the possible future construction of a tunnel.

Existing Conditions

Pennsylvania Avenue, between 15th and 17th Streets, and Jackson and Madison Places have been limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles since interim security measures were installed in 1995. These measures include large concrete planters (located on the street and across the sidewalks), security booths, and hydraulic plate barriers. In 1999, decorative bollards were installed in the northern portion of Lafayette Park, including Jackson and Madison Places.

The United States Secret Service (USSS) manages the entry portals to this precinct. The entry portals on Pennsylvania Avenue at 15th and 17th Streets serve as the primary security checkpoints and the entry portals from H Street at Jackson and Madison Places serve as the secondary security checkpoints.

Pennsylvania Avenue looking west



Pennsylvania Avenue is an 84-foot-wide asphalt roadway with a 33-foot-wide concrete sidewalk along the south side of the Avenue (White House side). On the north side of the Avenue, a 16-foot-wide concrete sidewalk is located in front of the Riggs Bank and Bank of America; an 18-foot-wide brick sidewalk is located in front of the Renwick Gallery and Blair House; and a 21-foot-wide brick sidewalk is located along Lafayette Park. Jackson and Madison Places are 40-foot wide roadways with residential-scale brick sidewalks on each side. The width of these walks ranges between 17 and 19 feet. Jackson Place currently accommodates 40 angled parking spaces adjacent to the park.

Jackson Place sidewalk looking south



A single row of street trees lines each curb, except for the portion of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House between East and West Executive Drives. Overall, the existing trees vary in age and size and, in places, are unevenly spaced. A row of Elm trees once lined the sidewalk in front of the White house, but these

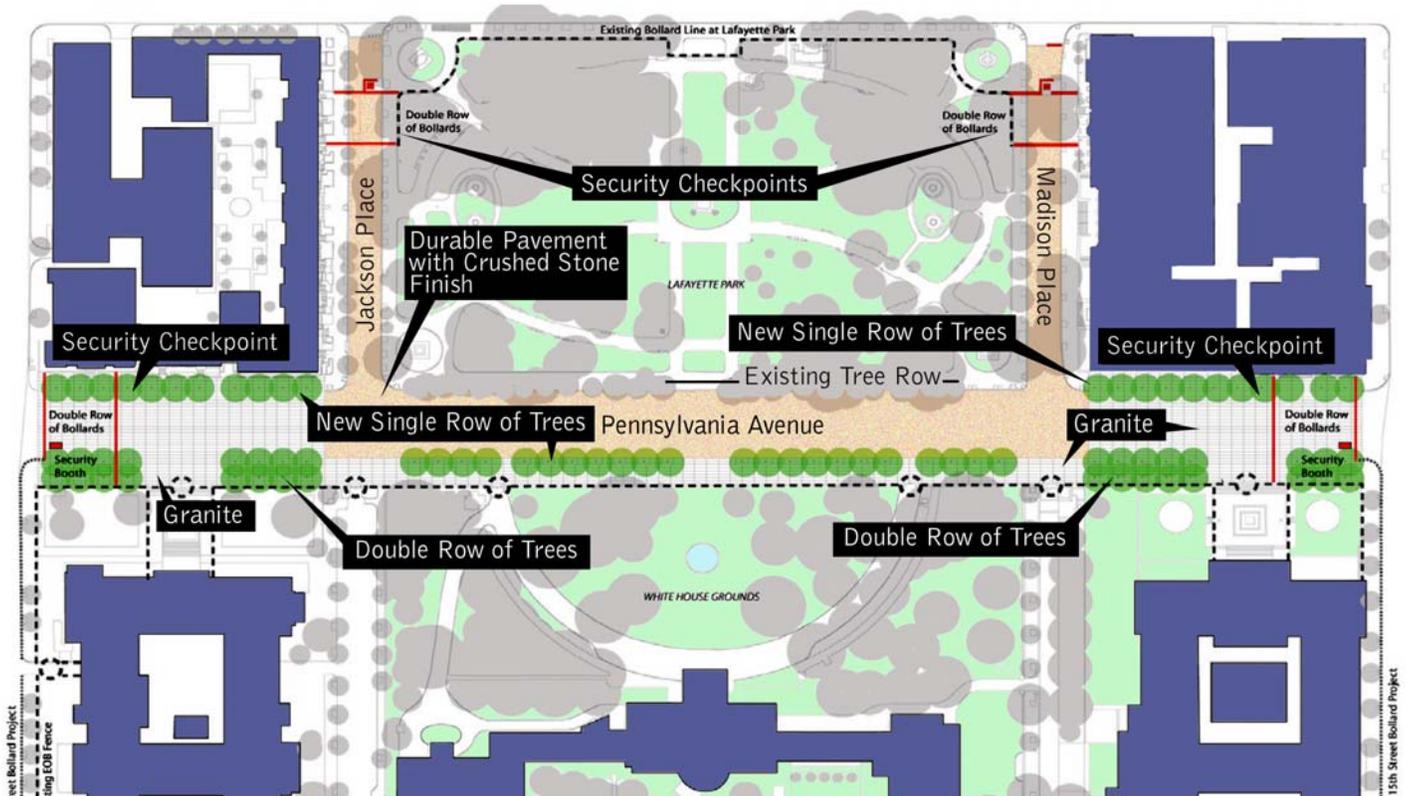
trees succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease in the mid-twentieth century. Large concrete bollards replaced the former tree row in 1988.

Different styles of cast iron light poles are installed along the sidewalks on Pennsylvania Avenue and along Lafayette Park, and some are used to post street and way-finding signage. Benches are located on the sidewalks around Lafayette Park, and there are several benches and way-finding kiosks at the entry portals at 15th and 17th Streets.

Project Description

The concept design addresses security operations, landscape treatment, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation. It also includes conceptual recommendations for lighting and paving materials. *The style and character of the architectural elements and the tree species will be developed in greater detail at the time of preliminary design and submitted to the Commission for review.*

Overall Site Plan



In conjunction with the concept design, daily security operations will be relocated to Jackson and Madison Places, and the checkpoints on Pennsylvania Avenue will be limited to pre-screened or cleared motorcades, emergency equipment, and the Downtown Circulator. Security booths and a

“sally port” (a secure area formed by two lines of bollards) are proposed to secure each of these four entry points.

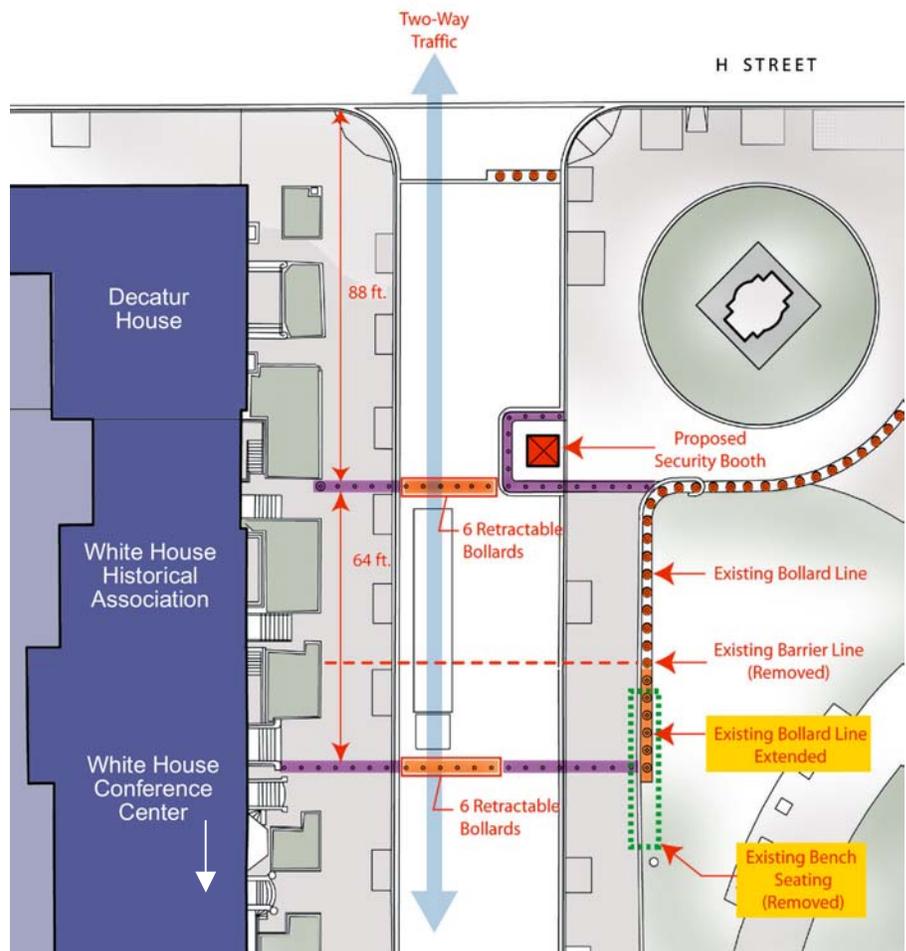
The security booths will be positioned to allow vehicles to approach the booth on the driver’s side. Fixed bollards will be placed in the sidewalks, except where there is a need to allow for the passage of vehicles or maintenance equipment. Removable bollards will be used in locations where there will be an infrequent need to remove the barrier, such as for the Inaugural Parade. Retractable bollards will be used where frequent passage is required.

Jackson and Madison Places

The proposed security improvements at Jackson and Madison Places include:

- Relocation of the existing bollard line on Jackson Place, and creation of a “sally port” on both Jackson and Madison Places. While, the existing bollard line on Madison Place will remain in its present location, the existing bollard line on Jackson Place will be relocated north. In both cases, these barrier lines will consist of a combination of fixed and hydraulic-retractable bollards, and will be placed 88 feet south of the intersection of H Street, with a second bollard line installed 64 feet further south to create a secure “sally port.” Vehicles will be inspected and cleared outside of the first bollard line prior to entering into the “sally port.” The “sally port” prevents tailgating and allows the guard to control entry.

Jackson Place Security Barrier Detail



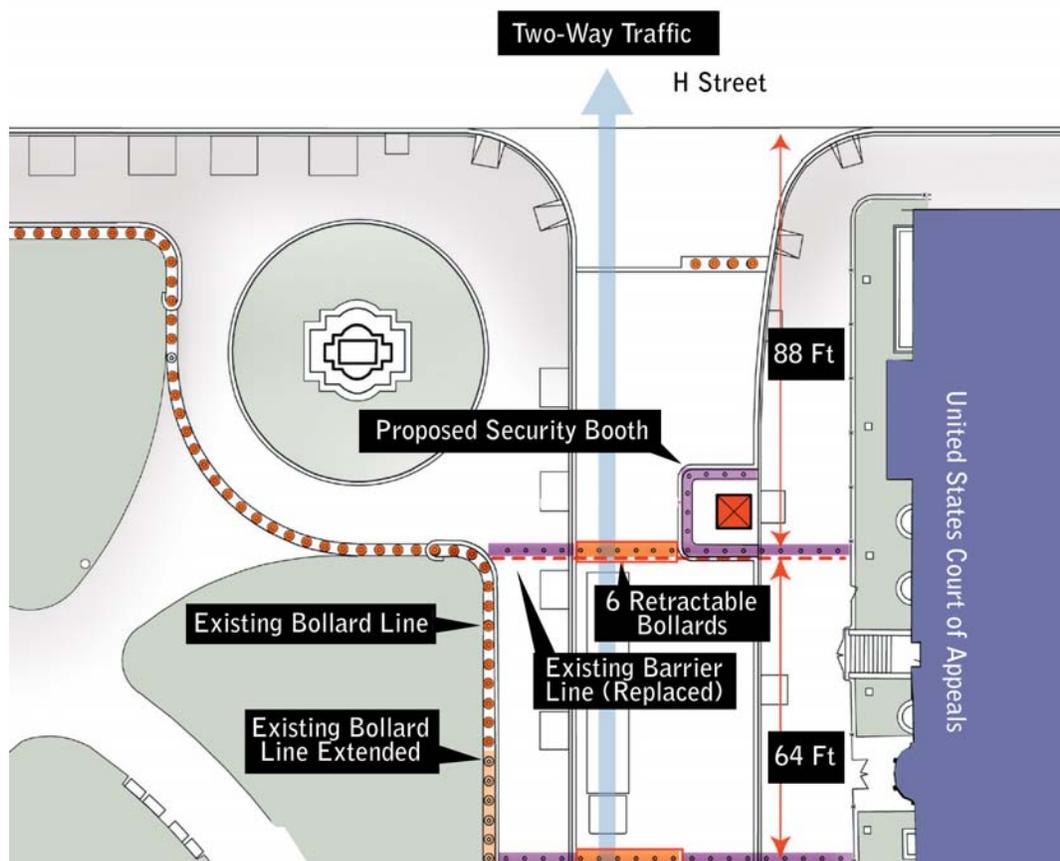
Both the outer and inner bollard lines will extend from the row house facades across the sidewalk and street, and tie into the existing bollard line in Lafayette Park. Three of the existing short row of bollards at H Street will be retained; 24 feet will be provided to slow

and channel vehicles entering and exiting the secure area. New bollards will be placed in front of the security booths to protect them from direct impact.

On Jackson Place, relocation of the bollard line and creation of the “sally port” will cause the benches on the perimeter sidewalk in Lafayette Park, located across from the White House Historical Association, to either be removed or relocated.

- *Replacement of security booths.* The existing temporary security booths installed in 1999 will be replaced with new architecturally appropriate booths and located just north of the outer bollard line. The security booths will sit on an extended sidewalk positioned to channel vehicles as they enter or exit the secure area, providing approximately 24 feet for two-way circulation.

Madison Place Security Detail



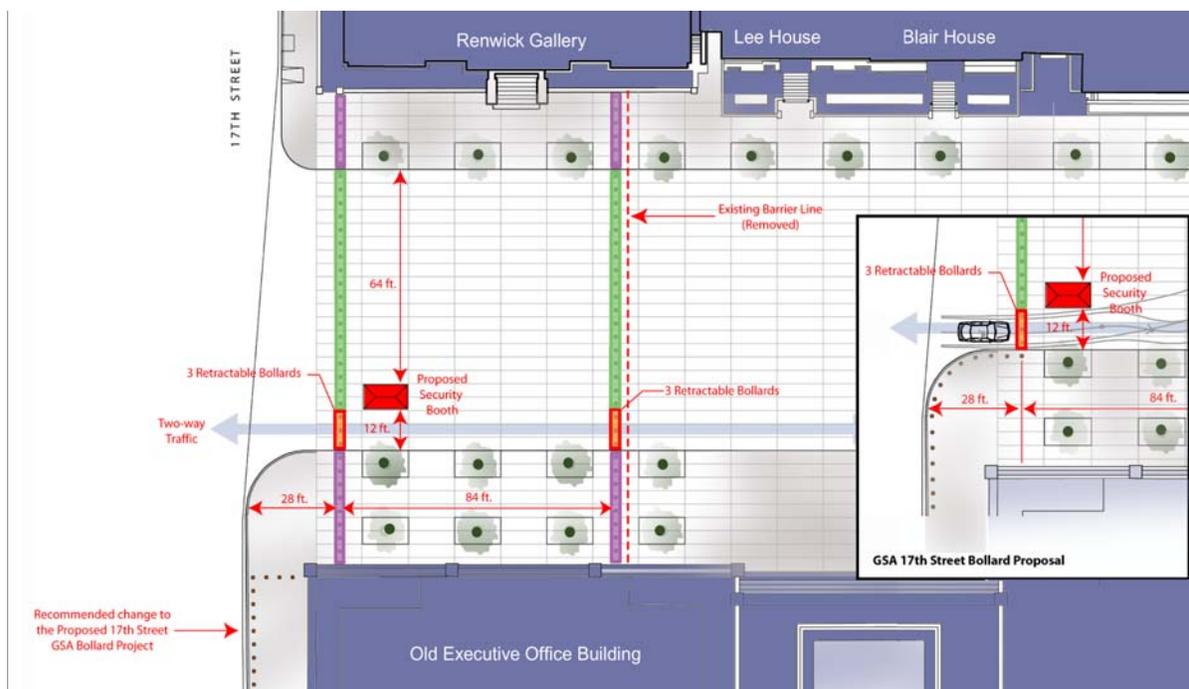
Pennsylvania Avenue at 15th and 17th Streets:

- *Relocation of the bollard lines and creation of a “sally port” at both 15th and 17th Streets.* The existing barrier line of planters and hydraulic plate barriers will be removed and a dual barrier line consisting of a combination of fixed, removable, and hydraulic retractable

bollards will be installed. The existing barrier lines will be relocated outward toward the intersections, and a second, inner barrier line installed to form the “sally port.” The new outer bollard line will be located 28 feet from the face of the intersection to allow one car to cue before entering the “sally port.”

- *Relocation and replacement of the security booths.* The Pennsylvania Avenue entrances are proposed to serve vehicular traffic limited to emergency equipment, pre-screened vehicles and motorcades, and the Downtown Circulator. Therefore, the security booths will be located inside the “sally port,” and cueing requirements outside the “sally port” will be minimal. Redesigned to be architecturally appropriate, the security booths will be placed on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue and positioned so that the vehicles approach the booths on the driver’s side.

17th Street Barrier Detail



17th Street

The existing barrier line at the 17th Street entrance will move slightly to the west to become the inner bollard line of the “sally port.”

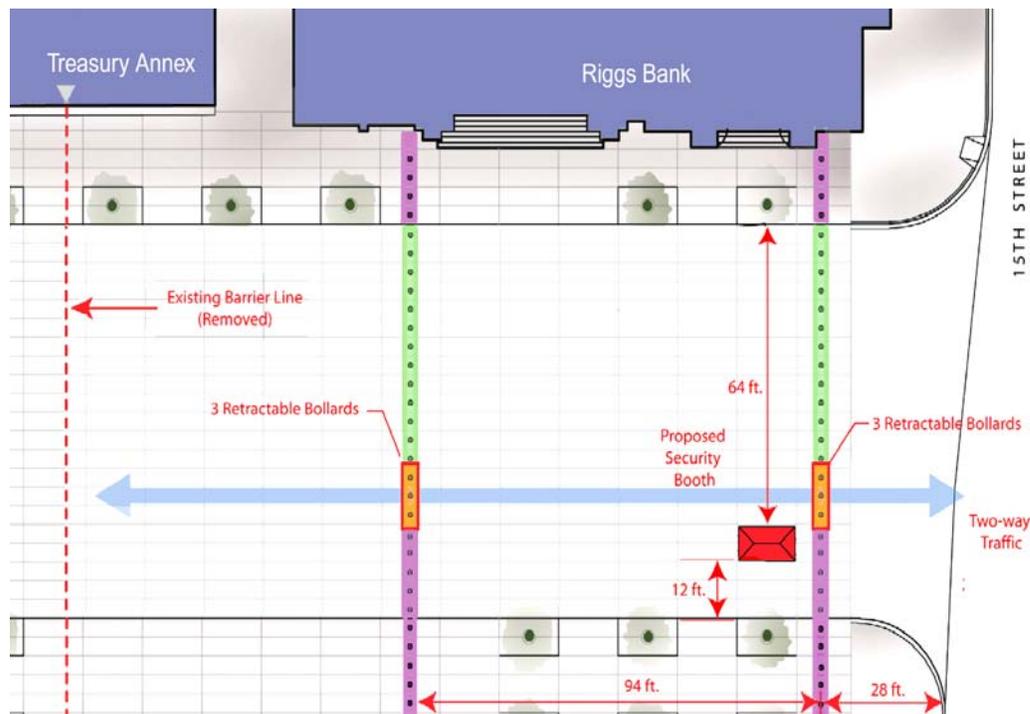
A new outer bollard line will be located 84 feet west, 28 feet from the intersection of 17th Street, to form the “sally port.” It will extend from the Renwick fence to the EEOB fence across Pennsylvania Avenue. GSA is currently installing bollards along the curb of 17th Street in front of the EEOB. This bollard line will intersect with the proposed Pennsylvania Avenue security improvements.

The proposed concept design modifies the approved EEOB 17th Street bollard line and its interface with the proposed Pennsylvania Avenue bollard line to improve the functional aspects of this corner.

15th Street

The existing barrier line at the 15th Street entrance will move east to become the inner bollard line of the “sally port.” A new bollard line will be installed 94 feet east, 28 feet from the intersection of 15th Street to form the “sally port.” The inner bollard line will be positioned west of the entry to Riggs Bank, and the outer bollard line positioned east of the Bank of America steps to avoid interfering with these entrances. These bollard liens will extend across Pennsylvania Avenue to the Treasury fence.

15th Street Security Barrier Detail



Circulation and Urban Design

The proposed concept design creates a pedestrian precinct, accommodating the important functions that occur within the area and securing it for the protection of the President and the President’s family and staff.

The proposed circulation components include:

- Using Jackson and Madison Places as the security checkpoint for daily operations, including deliveries and general authorized vehicles allowed entry to the precinct.
- Limiting the 15th and 17th Street security checkpoints to emergency vehicles, pre-screened vehicles, and motorcades, and the Downtown Circulator.

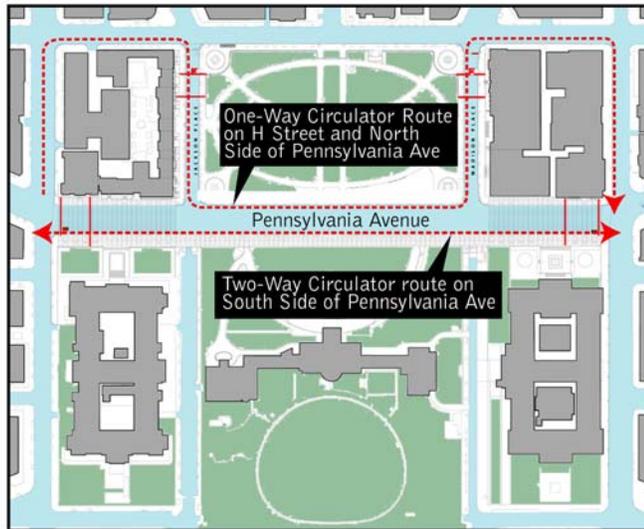
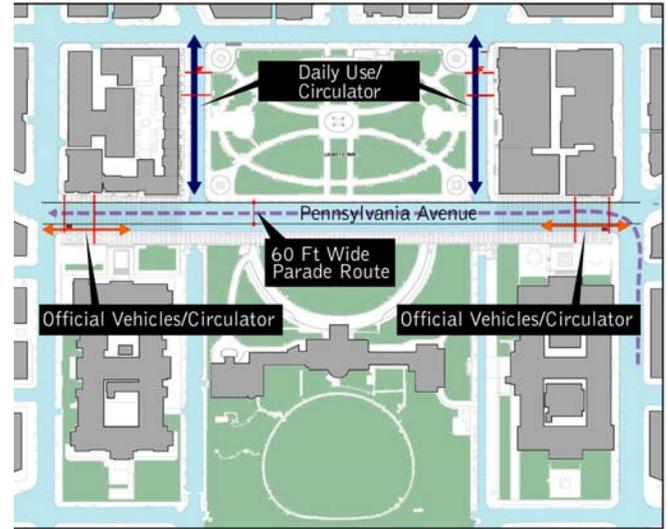


Diagram of Circulator Route Options



Circulation Diagram

- Accommodating two-way vehicular circulation along all roadways, and through each security checkpoint.
- Accommodating multiple routes in and out of the precinct for presidential or head-of-state motorcades, emergency vehicles, and the Downtown Circulator.
- Improving pedestrian access to, from, and along Pennsylvania Avenue and Jackson and Madison Places.
- Maintaining at least 60 feet of clear distance between the north curb line and the overhang of the proposed security booth on Pennsylvania Avenue for the Inaugural Parade.

The proposed urban design components include:

- Maintaining the width of Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Positioning the security booths on the southern portion of the roadway with their slender facades on the east-west axis to minimize their visual impact.

- Incorporating removable bollards across Pennsylvania Avenue to allow for unencumbered access for the Inaugural Parade.
- Potentially re-grading Pennsylvania Avenue to remove the crown of the existing right-of-way and to create a pedestrian space that will gently slope up to the White House from the park. This may require minor regrading of the sidewalk along the southern boundary of Lafayette Park. It is expected that the healthy and mature trees will be preserved and the existing brick, granite curbs, benches, and light poles will be reinstalled.
- Repaving the eastern and western ends of Pennsylvania Avenue with rectangular granite pavers. The granite will be placed with the long side parallel to the curb line to reinforce the axis of the Avenue and to accentuate these areas as entryways to the precinct.
- Repaving the central portion of Pennsylvania Avenue and Jackson and Madison Places with a durable pavement that has a solid, stabilized crushed stone finish to unify this area with President's Park and to create a comfortable place for pedestrians to gather, stroll, and contemplate the significance of this important place.
- Removing the large, concrete bollards located along the curb line on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House.
- Replacing and infilling trees along Pennsylvania Avenue as follows:
 - A single row of street trees along the north curb of Pennsylvania Avenue, except for those trees that can be preserved along the curb of Lafayette Park.
 - A double row of trees to form an allee along the south curb of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of Renwick Gallery, Blair House, EEOB, Treasury, Riggs Bank, and Bank of America.
 - A single row of trees along the south curb of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, excluding the area within the 16th Street cross-axial view to maintain and enhance the views to the White House.
- Using the design of the monumental White House fence and piers with their combination of cast iron and stonework to inspire the design of the security booths.
- Replacing or refurbishing the light poles along the length of Pennsylvania Avenue with the original Washington D.C. twin-headed lamp designed by Henry Bacon.
- Removing 40-angled parking spaces on Jackson Place to accommodate adequate circulation and loading functions, and to enhance the pedestrian experience and quality of President's Park.
- Removing or relocating bench seating from the inner edge of the sidewalk in Lafayette Park on Jackson Place to accommodate the "sally port."

EVALUATION

The visibility, international significance, security requirements, and symbolic importance of the White House and its environs present a significant design challenge. The proposed concept design addresses this challenge and a number of competing operational requirements in a thoughtful and respectful manner. The proposal enhances the historic setting and views of the White House, it reflects a clear memory of the Avenue's historic use, and it accommodates the staging of inaugural parades and the Downtown Circulator transit vehicle. In addition, the proposed design is easily reversible and does not preclude the future reopening of the street to vehicular traffic, or the future construction of a tunnel under Pennsylvania Avenue.

Security

The concept design satisfies the physical security and operational requirements by increasing the standoff distance and improving control of vehicles entering the secure precinct in a manner that does not visually dominate the environment or disrupt pedestrian movement or daily operational activity. This is achieved by:

- *Redirecting daily security operations.* While security operations for daily activity such as deliveries and visitors will be relocated to Jackson and Madison Places from Pennsylvania Avenue, the checkpoints on Pennsylvania Avenue will be limited to emergency equipment, pre-screened vehicles and motorcades, and the Downtown Circulator. Therefore, security operations will not be the primary activity on the cross axis in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. These operations will be relocated to a more intimate, contained area at the entry points of Jackson and Madison Places.
- *Improving the control of vehicular entry.* The security booths will be located to allow the security guard an unobstructed view of approaching vehicles, and the “sally port” configurations will maximize the guard’s control of entry into the precinct.

The distance between the “sally port’s” dual bollard lines is intended to satisfy operational requirements and minimize interference with the entries and functional requirements of adjacent buildings, such as delivery vehicles, motorcades, and emergency vehicles. This distance also prevents the two bollard lines from visually converging and creating the perception of a wall.

- *Maintaining an open feeling and allowing unencumbered pedestrian movement.* The bollards and security booths will be designed and positioned to complement the formal qualities of the buildings and site and will maintain the visual openness of the Avenue. The design of the bollards and booths is still under development. **Further evaluation of the location of the security booths and the bollard lines will be needed during preliminary design to minimize the impact on the Revolutionary War statues at the corners of Lafayette Park on H Street, and the views into Lafayette Park.**

Bollards and security booths are part of the typical palette of streetscape components established in President's Park and are appropriately associated with the control of movement along streets, sidewalks, and the edge of the park. Although the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* strives to reduce the reliance on bollards as the primary security element, the bollard has been chosen and is considered appropriate for a number of reasons. The existing presidential bollard has been specially designed and established as the primary security component in President's Park, including Lafayette Park. In addition to continuity, the bollard provides free pedestrian movement, maintains a visually open environment, and respects the character of the street. In this location, the placement of bollards is relatively limited, and is not perceived to be an odd or foreign element in this landscape.

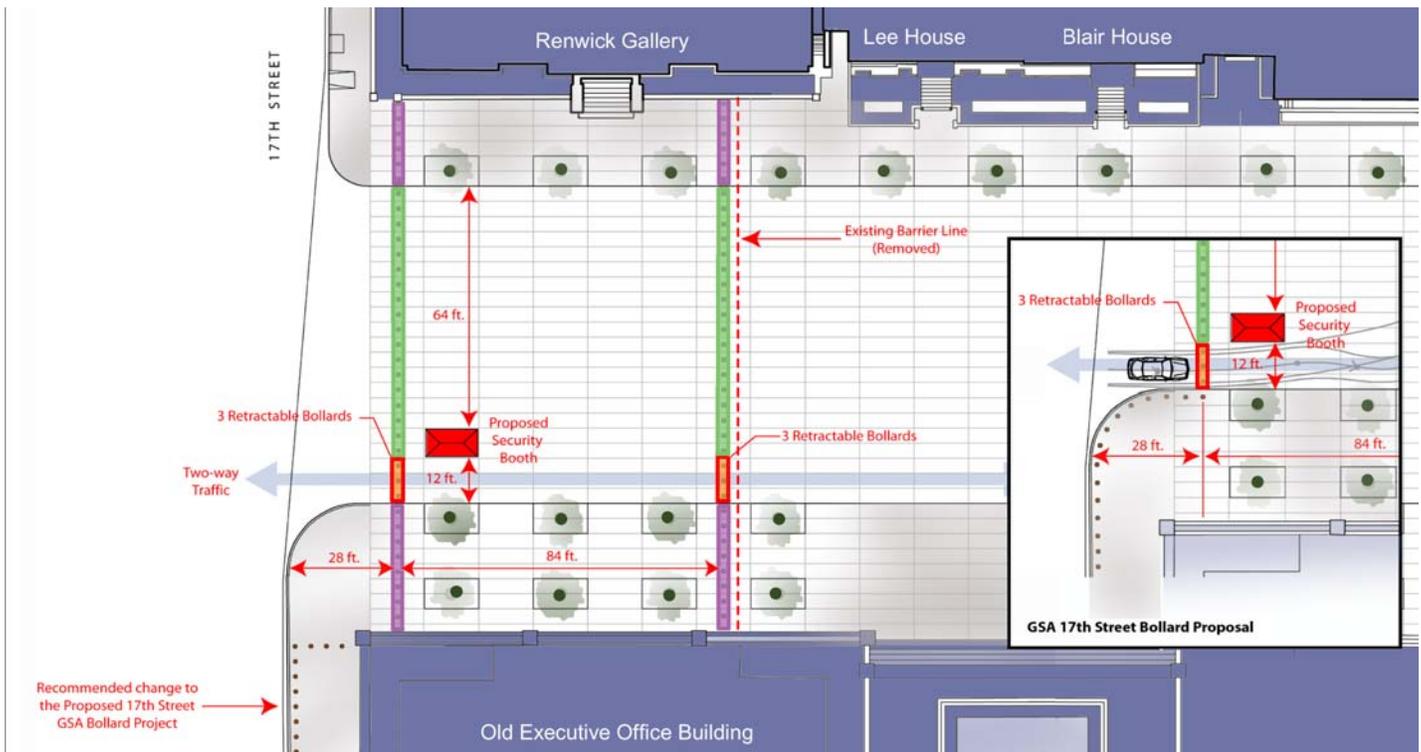
- ***Although the standoff distance from the White House is increased by relocating the barrier lines closer to intersecting streets, the location of the cueing and drop off area in relationship to the pedestrian crosswalks needs to be further evaluated on 15th and 17th Streets.*** Since entry will be limited at the 15th and 17th Street checkpoints, 28 feet of cueing distance is currently proposed outside the “sally port.” Because of the location of the cueing area and potential drop off area outside the outer bollard line in relationship to pedestrian crosswalks, the location of the outer bollard lines on 15th and 17th Streets should be re-evaluated in preliminary design to determine if additional distance should be provided to improve pedestrian circulation.

H Street is a one-way eastbound roadway, and ample cueing areas are provided on Jackson and Madison Places. At each of these locations, up to four cars or two, 40-foot trucks, can be accommodated before entering the “sally port,” and an additional three cars or one large truck can be processed within the “sally port” simultaneously.

- GSA is currently installing bollards along the curb of 17th Street as an extension of the Southside Barrier Project, and is working under an aggressive construction schedule. The GSA and NCPC approved bollard line extends up the 17th Street sidewalk and follows the curb of the intersection to connect with the proposed Pennsylvania Avenue security line (See illustration on the following page).

The proposed concept design for Pennsylvania Avenue includes a different bollard configuration line at 17th Street. Instead of stopping at the curb to connect with GSA's proposed bollard line, the proposed Pennsylvania Avenue bollard line extends across the sidewalk to the EEOB fence. The purpose of this configuration is to improve both the aesthetic and functional design of the Pennsylvania Avenue barrier line. Therefore, if approved, the proposed project will modify the previously approved 17th Street bollard line. **This design detail will require further evaluation and coordination as design development proceeds. Staff recommends that the Commission delegate authority to the Executive Director to work with the General Services Administration to modify the previously approved bollard configuration at the intersection of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue to better coordinate with this design concept and avoid disruption to the 17th Street bollard project construction schedule.**

17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue barrier line interface



Pedestrian Experience and Visual Quality

The concept design uses paving materials, tree planting, and pedestrian streetscape amenities to enhance the pedestrian experience and visual quality (as described below) of Pennsylvania Avenue. The concept design maintains consistency with the grace of Lafayette Park and the White House, and respects the open character of the Avenue and historic L'Enfant views of the White House. It also reinforces the White House as the focus of President's Park. While the Avenue will not appear as an open street for automobiles, the views that signify the importance and significance of the place will be maintained.

- *Large rectangular granite pavers are proposed at the entry portals on Pennsylvania Avenue at 15th and 17th Streets.* The pavers will reflect the grand scale and urbanity of the adjacent buildings and accentuate the entryways to the special precinct. The sense of entry is also reinforced by street tree planting on both sides of the Avenue, including the allees on the south side. This composition improves the pedestrian scale and emphasizes the transition to the heart of the space, the expansive open area in front of the White House. The use of large granite pavers for the 33-foot-wide sidewalk in front of the White House reinforces continuity along the Avenue, and creates a dignified and elegant edge to the existing fence and front lawn of the White House.

The heart of the space is reinforced through the use of perceptually softer, more natural paving material. The central portion of Pennsylvania Avenue, and Jackson and Madison Places are spatially connected through the use of a stabilized, crushed stone pavement, which strengthens the relationship of the street to President's Park. This pavement material not only provides a transition from the adjacent urban context to a more park-like atmosphere, it also signals the pedestrian to slow down, stroll, and reflect on the significance of the place. **As preliminary design proceeds, design development will include further defining the pavement structure to provide the desired surface appearance and texture while also satisfying structural support requirements.**

- *Tree Planting.* The placement of new trees and replacement of some existing trees will reinforce the visual axis along the length of the Avenue. New trees that form the allees on the south side of the Avenue, at the 15th and 17th entry points, will improve the pedestrian scale. The absence of trees in front of the White House will create a void and enhance the historic vista from 16th Street that was established in the L'Enfant Plan, emphasizing the sightlines toward the White House and its grounds.
- *Design of the security and streetscape amenity components.* Although the architectural style of the security booths and the character of the landscape elements are in the development stages, the ideas presented in the concept design will respect and complement the formal, classical setting and scale of the White House and President's Park. Any new materials introduced into the precinct must be compatible with its unique character and be of the highest quality and durability, imparting dignity and elegance.

Although the proposed security booths and bollard lines have been located to unobtrusively tie into the existing bollard lines or other adjoining structures, and to recede into the landscape, the precise placement of these elements will need to be refined during preliminary design to ensure that visual and functional impacts are minimal.

Historic Character and Integrity

The concept design retains the width and the curbs of the Pennsylvania Avenue cartway, and therefore the integrity of the dimensions of the historic street, which has been designated as part of the historic street plan of Washington, DC (known as the L'Enfant Plan). This two-block length of Pennsylvania Avenue did not exist on paper in L'Enfant's Plan, but it existed informally in physical fact beginning in the first years of the occupation of the White House and the street was formally named in 1824.

Pennsylvania Avenue in the two blocks in front of the White House has existed at its current width (or very close to it) since the formal adoption of the street in that year. In addition, the boundaries of Lafayette Park were also established in 1824, the year that the Marquis de Lafayette first visited Washington and addressed the public from the square. The square was fenced in the 1850s and the original fence line was confirmed in 1999 when the fence footings were uncovered. Similarly, the boundary of the north lawn of the White House has been

established since 1820 when the White House fence was installed (the current fence is a replica of the original fence).

The reintroduction of the street trees on the south sidewalk of Pennsylvania Avenue is a welcome reinforcement to the character of the Avenue as a city street. While the installation of security barriers in the cartway undoubtedly changes the character of the street right-of-way, the proposal to install the street trees and the Bacon light standard underscores the Task Force's and Commission's charge to the designer to retain the character—the memory—of the street while adapting it for new purposes and to ensure that the two-block length remains physically, visually, and symbolically linked to the rest of the city's street plan.

Jackson and Madison Places have been previously altered for security purposes with the installation of the Northside Barrier project. The concept design introduces an additional bollard line that will detract from the visual relationship between the historic buildings and the streets and park. However, the historic width of the streets and the sidewalks is retained, so that the buildings will continue to address the public space as they have for almost two hundred years.

Circulation

The concept design addresses many of the important circulation requirements for pedestrians, vehicles, and special events in the following manner:

- *Emergency Access.* Emergency access is accommodated at each of the four security checkpoints.
- *Pedestrian Activity.* Public gatherings are accommodated along the Avenue and in front of the White House. While the entire Avenue can accommodate free movement of pedestrians, the openness of the area in front of the White House, between Jackson and Madison Places, creates a grand and dignified memorial place to view the office and home of the President, and conduct public activities.
- *Downtown Circulator.* Multiple routes for the proposed Downtown Circulator are accommodated without detracting from the generally pedestrian character of the Avenue. The Circulator could traverse between 15th and 17th Street either via a direct route along Pennsylvania Avenue, or a less direct route south on Jackson Place, east along Pennsylvania Avenue, and north on Madison Place. The Circulator, a supplement to the downtown transit system, is an important component to re-establish limited cross town access since Pennsylvania Avenue is considered a contributing element of the historic street plan of Washington and a very important link in the established grid of the District of Columbia's transportation network. **When a route is selected, the design will need to address a way to delineate the route to minimize vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.**
- *Inaugural Parade.* The traditional route of the Inaugural Parade in front of the White House is accommodated. Security booths are located on the southern portion of Pennsylvania

Avenue to allow more than 60 feet of unencumbered access on the north side of the Avenue without having to move the security booths for the parade. The placement of the booths on Jackson and Madison Places will satisfy the access requirements for staging and emergency access. The placement of trees will allow construction of the viewing stands along the Avenue as well.

- *Official Use.* The official functions of the White House and Blair House are accommodated. The two-way circulation pattern at each of the four security checkpoints allows multiple routes in and out of the precinct for Presidential and Head of State motorcades. Additionally, ample unencumbered cueing area and parking for motorcades can be accommodated on Pennsylvania Avenue during special events at the White House and Blair House.
- *Deliveries.* The loading and delivery functions of the adjacent uses are accommodated. The “sally ports” can accommodate the screening of large delivery trucks before they proceed to their destination. Loading and by-pass lanes are also accommodated within the “sally ports” to serve adjacent uses.
- *Reversibility.* The Avenue could easily be reversed back to an 84-foot-wide thoroughfare, if at such time the security threat changes or technologies improve to allow high volumes of traffic on the Avenue. All landscape planting and streetscape elements are located outside of the 84-foot right-of-way; therefore, it will not be disturbed or negatively impacted by any change in roadway use.

Reconstruction of the Avenue would be limited to regrading of the roadway surface to meet highway standards, removal of the bollards and security booths from the roadway, and removal of bollards from the sidewalks and replacement of the pavement in those limited areas.

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

On January 9, 2003, the Commission approved plans to install presidential bollards along the curb line of 17th Street on the west side of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The bollards will extend from 17th Street and State Place on the south to 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue on the north. At the time the Commission approved the proposal, it was approved "with the understanding that the placement and locations of bollards at the intersection of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue will be modified in the future to be compatible with the plan for security improvements along the section of Pennsylvania Avenue between 15th and 17th Streets."

On October 2, 2002, the Commission adopted the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* that included the selection of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates as the design firm to design the civic improvements and security measures for Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House.

On November 2, 2001, the Commission adopted the recommendations of the Interagency Security Task Force and released the report “Designing for Security in the Nation’s Capital.” The report acknowledged that as a result of the terrorist threats since the early 1990s, Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House should be closed to regular vehicular traffic until such time as detection technology improved, or the security threat changed. It also called for immediate action to beautify and improve the condition of this important civic space. It also set forth a number of programmatic criteria necessary to mitigate the impact of its closure.

On July 9, 1998, the Commission approved final site and building plans for the Northside Barrier Replacement around Lafayette Park and Jackson and Madison Places, NW. On April 2, 1998, the Commission commented on the EA for the Northside Barrier Replacement project.

On June 19, 1997, the Commission commented on the EA for the implementation of White House Security Recommendations on Vehicular Traffic Restrictions submitted by the Department of the Treasury. The Department of Treasury subsequently issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and concluded its environmental review of traffic restrictions in the vicinity of the White House.

On June 27, 1996, the Commission tabled the Alternative Design concepts for Street Improvements along Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, between 15th and 17th Streets until such time as a NEPA document addressing traffic, economic impacts, and historic preservation was prepared by the U.S. Department of Treasury and forwarded by the NPS to the Commission.

COORDINATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed this item at its meeting on February 13, 2003, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented, except the D.C. Department of Transportation whose representative expressed concern about the placement of the circulator lane in front of the White House. The participating agencies were NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the Fire Department; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Subsequent to the meeting, DCDOT concurred in the coordination of the project.

CONSULTATION

Multiple entities have been consulted throughout the planning and design development process for Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. The primary efforts are listed in reverse chronological order.

- *NEPA/Section 106 Consultation Meetings.* On February 25, 2003, the Federal Highway Administration, in conjunction with NCPC, held a public consultation meeting to review and discuss the project and any potential effects on historic resources.

On January 15, 2003, the Federal Highway Administration, in conjunction with NCPC, held the initial NEPA and Section 106 public open house. The purpose of this meeting was to solicit additional input from the public regarding design considerations for Pennsylvania Avenue.

- *Verification Study.* Between October 2002 and January 2003, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates conducted a verification study that involved meeting with key stakeholders to determine the detailed operational and functional requirements for the project. The designer also met with a group of noted historians and architects to obtain input regarding historic resources and urban design. A list of the verification study meetings is provided in Attachment II.
- *Initial Design Idea Circulated for Public Comment.* On September 4, 2002, the NCPC accepted public comment on the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* (NCUDSP) that included Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates' design idea. On July 11, 2002, the NCPC released the NCUDSP and design idea for a 45-day public comment period.
- *Idea Generation for Design Approach.* In February 2002, as part of the NCUDSP, four landscape architects were asked to submit ideas on how to improve the Avenue in an effort to generate design idea approaches. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates was chosen as the designer to proceed with the design effort.
- *Reconsideration and review of previous design proposals.* Between March 2001 and September 2001, the Interagency Security Task Force consulted with security, urban design, transportation and historic preservation experts to evaluate and debate the appropriateness of the Avenue's closure. The Security Task Force reached the difficult conclusion that Pennsylvania Avenue should remain closed until the security threat ended. This consensus decision by all Task Force members and key stakeholders, including the U.S. Secret Service, the National Park Service, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Federal City Council, and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, was reached only after considerable debate and agreement on a number of programmatic requirements.

As part of this evaluation, the Security Task Force conducted a thorough review and deliberation of all previous design proposals prepared for the Avenue. Among design proposals generated over a 40-year period, the reviews also included the National Park Service's Comprehensive Design Plan for President's Park, and the design process used by the National Park Service in 1995 and 1996 for the Avenue. Both of these efforts included extensive input from both national experts and the general public.

National Historic Preservation Act

FHWA is serving as the lead agency for conducting the Section 106 review for this undertaking, in partnership with NCPC. Consultation has been underway in several phases since the Task Force began its work in March 2001, first with federal and District of Columbia agency members of the Task Force, along with advising agencies and invited technical experts. In addition, presentations of the Task Force's work were made to professional groups locally and nationally. The Task Force released its report in November 2001, followed by a comment period. The second phase of the collective inquiry culminated in the July 2002 draft *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan*, which was followed by a 45-day comment period. In addition, the Commission heard public testimony at its July 11, 2002 commission meeting.

In the *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan*, an initial scheme for design and security modifications to Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House was presented. Throughout Fall 2002, NCPC, FHWA, and the designer met with agencies and adjacent property owners having functional and technical operations in President's Park. As a result of the many operational requirements of the area, and following further site investigation and design development, the current concept plan has been proposed for concept review by the Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and for use in the NEPA assessment and Section 106 consultation.

The first NEPA and Section 106 Scoping Meeting was held on January 15, 2003 to brief the public on the project, the initial concept idea, and the review process and timeline. The first Section 106 public consultation meeting was held on February 25, 2003 to review the revised concept proposal. Subsequent public meetings will be scheduled throughout the review process. Staff's initial determination, in consultation with the DC State Historic Preservation Office and other agencies and parties, is that that project will have an *adverse effect* on the historic resources in the area, given the installation of bollards and guard booths in the rights-of-way and the resulting change to the character of the open space and the views. Other effects may result from the specific placement of the bollard lines against building facades or historic fences or railings, as well as from alterations to the site through the change or differentiation of materials.

Staff anticipates that these adverse effects can be mitigated through the further study of the history and existing character of the site and the resulting refinement of the proposal as design development proceeds. The placement of the bollard lines will require further study, as will the placement of the proposed street trees. The color, scale, and pattern of differentiation of the new paving materials are also significant issues deserving of further historic preservation research and consultation.

Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House is one of the most historic and symbolically sensitive places in the nation. The White House at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue lies within President's Park, a special precinct of the nation's capital. Generous public spaces and views, historic buildings and landscapes, and associations to historical events and people characterize this precinct and tell its history. These settings, buildings, and associations have great significance for the American people.

Pennsylvania Avenue is an important element in the White House setting. It traverses the L'Enfant reservation between the White House and Lafayette Park and provides a world-renowned address, public access, open views, and orientation for the White House and other buildings situated on and near it. The route of Pennsylvania Avenue through the reservation was not part of L'Enfant's 1791 Plan. It developed as the White House was built, and continued as an informal path in subsequent years. Pennsylvania Avenue was formally made a public street in 1824, the same year that General Lafayette visited Washington and spoke to the public from the park now named in his honor. The segment of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House has been designated a contributing element of the historic street plan of Washington, also known as the L'Enfant Plan.

The landscape design of Lafayette Park by Andrew Jackson Downing, the noted horticulturist and landscape designer, was implemented in the mid-19th century and is still largely intact. Most of the 19th-century buildings along Madison and Jackson Places facing Lafayette Park are now executive branch offices, although they were originally private dwellings. Similarly, the buildings on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, such as the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery, Blair House, and Riggs Bank, reflect earlier private development near the White House. Lafayette Park is the centerpiece of the Lafayette Square Historic District, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970. The historic district contains approximately thirty buildings, including the Eisenhower Executive Office Building and the Treasury Building flanking the White House. Most of the buildings in the Lafayette Square Historic District are also individually designated in the National Register of Historic Places. The 15th Street Financial Historic District and the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site are other designations that document the area's significance.

As in other parts of Washington, and particularly in President's Park, open space—including the street rights-of-way and parkland—is as significant to the historic setting and as worthy of protection as the buildings. The views and vistas along Pennsylvania Avenue, as well as to and from the avenues radiating from the White House, are significant. The avenues provide vantage points from which to view the White House and nearby buildings, and they also comprise an important aspect of the setting of the White House.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FHWA, as the responsible federal agency for the proposal, has determined that it will undertake preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project plans. Although general characteristics of the site and existing features have been well established and evaluated under earlier federal government studies, a full environmental evaluation of the specific proposal will be required.

The site for the improvements would be consistent with other land uses within the area as identified in the Commission's approved *National Capital Urban Design and Security Plan* completed in October 2002. Further evaluation of the location of the discrete physical security elements would reasonably occur in the subsequent EA.

Circulation routes for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic are potentially accommodated with the proposed site rehabilitation. In limited extents, re-design of the existing sidewalks, curbs, and adjacent roadways would occur pending further project design definition. No additional parking spaces would be provided as demonstrated in the concept design. Adjacent side streets do exhibit the potential to provide limited accessible parking.

The project is essentially a site rehabilitation effort that is limited in any potential environmental effects. Consequently, staff finds the concept design acceptable to advance to preliminary site development with further environmental documentation occurring in conjunction with that effort. At that time, impacts associated with a specific access design and any potential adverse historic effect determination would be evaluated. Staff believes the appropriate course of environmental review is for FHWA to complete the EA with a resulting determination by the FHWA concerning the project's environmental effects pursuant to NEPA. The public and other appropriate local government and federal agencies would be given an opportunity to comment on that NEPA review prior to submitting the preliminary design to the Commission.

The FHWA has identified the Commission as a cooperating agency in the preparation process for the NEPA document as specified in CEQ guidance issued at 48 Fed. Reg. 34264 (1983) concerning the joint use of NEPA documents, and reflects the cooperative status of NCPC as required by 40 CFR 1501.5, 1501.6 and CEQ guidance issued September 25, 2000.

COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN PLAN FOR THE WHITE HOUSE AND PRESIDENT'S PARK

The National Park Service, in cooperation with many agencies and entities, including the Commission, developed the Comprehensive Design Plan (CDP) for the White House and President's Park. Approved by the Commission in May 2000, the CDP addresses the physical and functional needs of the White House, the Executive Office of the President, and the president and his family for the next twenty years. Incorporated in the proposed solutions are measures to improve the historic and visual character of President's Park. The CDP addresses resource conservation and protection, White House support services, visitor services, special events, transportation and parking, and site management and operations. The CDP did not address the future plans for Pennsylvania Avenue itself, but did provide for security barriers along H Street at the north of the site; the Northside Barrier project was implemented before the adoption of the CDP.

The CDP recommended the removal of parking on Jackson Place, as well as surface parking throughout the Park, to improve its appearance, function, and security. In the context of the current proposal, the removal of parking spaces and vehicles would allow for adequate area for traffic flow, and loading and deliveries. The CDP calls for the provision of 1,140 parking spaces in several locations below grade within President's Park.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

There are two elements of the National Capital Planning Commission's Comprehensive Plan that most directly apply to the Pennsylvania Avenue Security and Landscape Design Project; these are the Parks, Open Space and Natural Features Element and the Preservation and Historic Features Element.

The proposed concept design is consistent with the goals and policies in both elements.

The concept design has met the project's objectives of satisfying both security and circulation requirements and of beautifying and improving the quality of the public space. This has been achieved while acknowledging the historic character and integrity of the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans. The proposed landscape components enhance the public buildings and civic space, and provide a flexible space for public use and gatherings. The security features have been located, to the degree possible, to minimize the impacts to the historic character of the setting.

The Comprehensive Plan encourages that cultural and open space resources--the legacy of the L'Enfant Plan and the McMillan Plans--be conserved through protection and enhancement, and also serve as places for documenting our natural heritage. President's Park, including Lafayette Park, qualifies as a Monumental and Decorative Park, a Designed Landscape, and as a Historic Park in the Parks and Open Space System.

The following policies in the Park, Open Space and Natural Features Element guide the development and protection of these resources:

- The great cross-axes of the Mall Complex, from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial, are a unique national space—they are a summary of democratic ideals and achievements that must be protected from inappropriate development. The Mall should be considered complete, and any improvements necessary in this area should be limited in scope and sensitively designed to reinforce the integrity of the Mall Complex.
- The Mall Complex should primarily serve as a formal setting for the Capitol, the White House, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Tidal Basin and should be maintained as a large landscaped, open, and ecologically significant area. It should also serve as a heritage education center and meet the passive/leisure and active recreational needs of visitors and residents, to the extent that its primary purpose is not compromised.
- Monumental Parks and Designed Landscapes should serve as settings to enhance public buildings, monuments, and memorials; as such, their fundamental integrity should be protected. They should also serve as outdoor areas for displays and cultural activities, as well as areas for passive and controlled active recreational activities, including lunchtime picnics and gatherings.

- The historic urban design framework of the Nation's capital established by the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans for opens space, long axes, and dramatic vistas must be protected.
- Designed landscape parks (squares, circles, and triangles) associated with the L'Enfant City should be restored, where necessary, protected, and enhanced generally as green landscaped areas providing oases for pedestrians and settings for monuments, memorials, and civic art.
- Historic parks should be established and preserved as important legacies of national historic, architectural, and landscape significance. Special efforts should be taken to provide for the interpretation of their history. Historic parks should be properly maintained to provide for ht controlled use that respects their historical integrity. Ancillary uses, such as access, visitor and multi-purpose activities, should not detract from the historical value of these sites.

The Preservation and Historic Features element of the Comprehensive Plan provides further guidance.

- The goal and objectives include:

Preserving and enhancing the urban spaces, circles, squares, and plazas generated by the L'Enfant Plan and McMillan Plan and the unique views and vistas of the National Capital;

Promoting continuity in the planning of the historic design framework of the National Capital as generated by the L'Enfant and McMillan Plans, and protecting their important intangible, as well as tangible qualities such as the setting, system of streets and intended character of development.

[Preserving] the important Historic Features of the District while permitting new development that is compatible with those features.

[Increasing] awareness of, and access to, facilities, place, and activities essential to residents and visitors.

- The Federal and District governments should cooperatively to:

Provide leadership in the protection and enhancement of the important Historic Resources of the National Capital.

Establish and sustain exemplary standards of property stewardship, design, and maintenance for all Historic property under their ownership or control.

Ensure that records relating to the construction, alteration, and demolition of Historic Properties or potential Historic properties are retained for future use and reference.

Ensure that actions that affect Historic Properties are reviewed for historic preservation impacts.

- Every effort should be made to provide for the continued, appropriate use of all Historic properties. If the original use or a reasonable intensification of the original use is no longer feasible, appropriate adaptive use . . . should be encouraged.
- The distinguishing qualities or character of Historic Landscapes should be protected and enhanced.
- Within Historic Districts, and particularly within the L'Enfant City, original street patterns should be preserved by maintaining public rights-of-way.

- The distinguishing original quality or character of historic properties should be protected. The removal or alteration of any historically valuable material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible and kept to a minimum when required for continued use.
- New construction on Historic Landmarks or in Historic Districts should be compatible with the historical architectural character and cultural heritage of the landmark or district. In design, height, proportion, mass, configuration, building materials, texture, color, and location, new construction should complement these valuable features of the landmark or district, particularly features in the immediate vicinity to which the new construction will be visually related.