

the jurisdiction of the city. A portion of the street sits on sub-surface parking and a portion is elevated to cross over the train tracks, the 10 lane freeway and ramps, and frontage access roads. Stairs and access ramps create a complex layer of building entrances and pedestrian routes, making it difficult to get around. The lack of trees or other vegetation, minimal seating, and poor use and quality of materials make the street uncomfortable to walk or linger.

Banneker Park is an eight acre elevated site that sits 30 feet above Maine Avenue. It overlooks the Washington Channel with sweeping vistas to East Potomac Park, the Potomac River, and beyond. This federal parkland is managed by the National Park Service. The park contains a plaza that sits within a large, barren, sloping lawn containing vehicular access ramps and includes interpretive signage commemorating the contributions of Benjamin Banneker. Poor pedestrian conditions cause the plaza to seem disconnected from the city despite being less than a half mile from the Mall. It is occasionally used by workers during lunch and as a pass through for pedestrians that take the steep dirt slope to the Maine Avenue Fish Market.

A planned new waterfront community will soon transform this area into a lively mixed-use neighborhood and regionally important waterfront destination. This investment is supplemented by expansion and improvements to the L'Enfant Plaza Complex. These new developments will alter some of the mid-century Modern public spaces along 10th Street and the waterfront, as well as reduce the views of the river from Banneker Park.

## CONSIDERATIONS

There are several considerations to be addressed as decisions are made to revitalize the 10th Street corridor and Banneker Park.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION** 10th Street was once a neighborhood street that serviced the working wharfs along the river. It was altered in the mid-20th century into a large plaza-like street (L'Enfant Promenade) and park (Reservation 719). The vistas associated with 10th Street, SW and Reservation 719 (now known as Banneker Park) are called out as non-contributing elements in the NRHP nomination of the L'Enfant Plan of Washington. These non-conformities are a result of the altered street grid, block configurations, and topographical changes that occurred during the urban renewal era when the Forrestal Complex was built and 10th Street was reconstructed to span the train tracks and the freeway. Although the intent of the SW Ecodistrict Plan is to re-establish the street grid and

the block configuration of the L'Enfant Plan, further evaluation of the mid-century Modern buildings and landscape will be necessary to determine their historical significance.

The L'Enfant Plaza Complex and the Overlook were designed by IM Pei and Dan Kiley, two renowned mid-century Modern de-signers. The Modern buildings and landscapes of this era are nearing the threshold for consideration for inclusion on the NRHP. Although several nearby federal buildings and spaces have been determined eligible for the NRHP, neither the U.S. Postal Service nor 10th Street (L'Enfant Promenade) has been studied to determine their eligibility. Some research has been conducted to evaluate the potential eligibility of Banneker Park and the work of Dan Kiley; however, it is inconclusive at this time. Additional research and evaluation is necessary to determine the eligibility for these landscapes and buildings, and compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The federal government will be required to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act in the development of proposals to sell, alter, repurpose, or redevelop resources considered eligible for or listed in the NRHP.

**CULTURAL FACILITIES** Over the centuries the area evolved from a river plantation to a settlement of immigrants and freed African Americans, to the nation's first full-scale urban renewal project. A cultural heritage trail called River Farms to Urban Towers details the rich history of this area. In 1971, the 10th Street Overlook was named Banneker Park in honor of Benjamin Banneker, a freed African American astronomer and mathematician who helped to survey the boundaries of the new capital city. Legislation to designate this site as a national memorial to Benjamin Banneker lapsed in 2005; new legislation has been introduced but not enacted at the time this plan was written.

On axis with the Smithsonian Castle, the terminus of 10th Street (Banneker Park) is called out in the Museums and Memorials Master Plan as one of the top 20 prime sites for a future museum or memorial. The siting of the park and the perception that the area is isolated and removed from the National Mall has deterred several museum sponsors from seriously considering the site for a nationally significant museum. However, with continued investment in the area and nearby neighborhoods, the site is garnering the attention of museum and memorial sponsors.

**ELEVATED 10TH STREET** The conditions below 10th Street and the topography of the park present opportunities and challenges. As an