



## Information Presentation

Commission Meeting: February 16, 2022

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**PROJECT****Pennsylvania Avenue Vision and Concepts**

Pennsylvania Avenue between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>  
Streets, NW  
Washington, DC

**NCPC FILE NUMBER**

7509

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**SUBMITTED BY**

National Capital Planning Commission

**REVIEW AUTHORITY**

Information Presentation

**PRESENTER**

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**Pennsylvania Avenue, NW** between the U.S. Capitol and the White House is the nation's most iconic ceremonial boulevard. It is an important city asset, one-of-a-kind national destination, and instantly recognized world-wide. Yet economic and physical changes have significantly impacted the Avenue's function and character over the last few decades. Economic, physical, and land use conditions have impacted the thoroughfare, reducing its utility as a street. No longer a primary artery, it is now a largely empty and lackluster space that struggles to support retail and sustain activity which has been compounded by the pandemic. However, the Avenue's character makes it a desirable venue for local and regional events. As public spaces play a critical role in post-pandemic recovery, we now have a unique opportunity to elevate its role as a place for civic activity. As a key component of the city's civic infrastructure, it can become an extraordinary national special event destination that supports downtown's economic revitalization efforts.

The Avenue is currently guided by an outdated congressionally mandated 48-year-old plan. After completing technical studies<sup>1</sup> and obtaining input from subject matter experts, an Executive Committee (EC) of federal and local agencies<sup>2</sup>, and key stakeholders<sup>3</sup> is collaborating to address the Avenue's declining physical condition, its outdated infrastructure, its complex regulatory and operational structure, and how it can contribute to the downtown's economy.

The purpose of this information presentation is to introduce a new vision for Pennsylvania Avenue with three concepts that explore different ways to elevate the Avenue as a venue, modernize its infrastructure, improve its physical condition, revitalize its economic health, and achieve the EC's four primary goals:

- *Celebrate the Avenue's civic role and spirit of democracy.*
- *Create an awe-inspiring public realm to complement the Avenue's role and character.*
- *Modernize the Avenue's security, event, transportation, and public infrastructure for 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs.*

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<sup>1</sup> Key studies include a Market and Economic Analysis; a robust Transportation Study; a Cultural Landscape Report; an Urban Design Analysis, a Pedestrian Life Study; and a Programming Study.

<sup>2</sup> Local and federal representatives serve on the EC, including GSA, NPS, NCPC, and DDOT, DCOP, and CFA.

<sup>3</sup> Events DC and the Downtown Business Improvement District (DC DBID).

- *Elevate the identity of the Avenue as a great destination.*

Each concept reprioritizes cars, transit, and pedestrians, and reconfigures public space differently to enhance daily use and increase flexible usable area for a variety of small and large events:

- **Urban Capital Street** establishes a ‘complete street’ with comfort amenities and service that create a go-to place and respite for locals and tourists
- **Linear Green** prioritizes transit, people, and bikes and creates a unique destination for outdoor gatherings and connection to nature
- **Civic Stage** centers pedestrians within a large median promenade with flexible public spaces that create iconic venues for a range of national and international events

While we work toward a larger vision, federal and District agencies are developing a near and mid-term action agenda to implement that can show quick returns with relatively minimal investment.

The EC will request authorization to release the work for a 120-day public comment period in March 2022. Public and stakeholder input on the vision and concepts will inform future concept development and design work.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

<b>Previous actions</b>	<p><b>October 5, 2017</b> – Information presentation on the Executive Committee research, analysis, and findings.</p> <p><b>May 3, 2018</b> – Information presentation on the <i>Executive Committee Findings and Strategies Summary</i>.</p> <p><b>June 3, 2021</b> – Information presentation on the status of the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative and a public invitation to join an expert panel discussion.</p>
<b>Remaining actions</b> (anticipated)	<p>– Authorization to release for 120-day public comment period (<i>March 2022</i>)</p> <p>– Information presentation on the status of the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative (2022 – 2023)</p> <p>– Review and approve revised 1974 Pennsylvania Avenue Plan (<i>long-term</i>)</p>