

## Public Questions and Comments

Submitted during *America's Civic Stage: A Vision to Celebrate Pennsylvania Avenue*

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- 1) Western Plaza, now known as Freedom Plaza, is a huge barren frying pan of a public space, especially during Washington's summers. Any thought to restoring the diagonal path of Pennsylvania Avenue through this space again, along with the former triangle parks, green space in front of the Wilson Building and trees restored? Make it greener and more human in scale. It still could accommodate large events and crowds.

Michael La Place, [mlaplace@princetonnj.gov](mailto:mlaplace@princetonnj.gov)

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- 2) I'm a Ward 5 resident that depends on Louisiana Avenue to connect from the Met Branch Trail to the PA Ave cycle track. What can be done to make Architect of the Capitol remove their opposition of the DDOT-proposed Louisiana Avenue cycle track?

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 3) The large front setback along the northerly side of Pennsylvania Avenue, recommended by the PADC, is too large and has deadened that side of the street. Shouldn't the buildings be closer to the street or at least no further from the street than the Federal Triangle buildings on the south side of the avenue? Historic buildings on the north side such as the old Evening Star building relate better to the avenue than the newer developments set further back from the cartway."

Michael La Place, [mlaplace@princetonnj.gov](mailto:mlaplace@princetonnj.gov)

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- 4) Any thoughts about Pennsylvania Avenue in front of and northwest of the White House, to Washington Circle and past the George Washington University? This section is where the nation's main street also becomes a local thoroughfare.

Michael La Place, [mlaplace@princetonnj.gov](mailto:mlaplace@princetonnj.gov)

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- 5) FBI Building site - such a dead spot on the avenue. So much potential!

Michael La Place, [mlaplace@princetonnj.gov](mailto:mlaplace@princetonnj.gov)

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- 6) With greater mixed-use public spaces on PA Avenue, which of the stakeholders is best positioned to program and govern those spaces? The Avenue crosses many different BIDs. How do we avoid that mini-airstream vendor having to deal with a half-dozen different agencies?

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 7) How do the panelist view the relationship of Penn Ave to the National Mall, and extensions of the DC historic district, so as to unify the city rather than compartmentalize one area/segment. How can the conversation activate the neighborhoods beyond.

Andrew Scott, [scotta@si.edu](mailto:scotta@si.edu)

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- 8) One of the issues we have (and have had for some time) is that some of the food truck vendors that frequented Penn Ave do so without licenses, which DCRA seems incapable of regulating. The trucks also directly or indirectly create more trash which increases an already severe rodent problem in this city. For those of us who are residents of this area, if you want to increase ""flexible supply"", there absolutely must be a corresponding increase in both regulations, so that all vendors are operating under the law, and in trash pickup. Given the response we've seen to date, we are not convinced that will be the case. Correction: not more regulation, just enforcement of existing regulation

Gigi Nelson, [2c03@anc.dc.gov](mailto:2c03@anc.dc.gov)

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- 9) Why are we not moving faster for the non-famous parts of Penn Ave? We've spent a lot of time re-thinking, re-designing, and capital investment changing Penn Ave NW, from Capitol to White House. But Penn NW from 17th to Wash Circle remains dangerous and Penn NE from 2nd NE to Barney Circle.

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 10) Though Penn Ave has many different landowners and stakeholders, in practice, federal agencies veto the ideas brought forth by DDOT and DC residents. What can we do to empower residents to govern their own streets. Penn, Constitution, Independence -- in NE/NW and SE/SW -- are all dangerous.

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 11) How would pending DC Statehood be address in some of these ideas? Most of the length of Pennsylvania Avenue beyond the Capitol and west of the White House will become a DC street.

Sally Blumenthal, [salkist2@aol.com](mailto:salkist2@aol.com)

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- 12) How does all this take into account possible DC statehood?

Anonymous Attendee

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- 13) What can be done with the current tree types? They are all uniform, which seems un-American. How about introducing some other tree types, like the sycamore tree, which is a very individualistic tree, which seems more American?

Gerry Widdicombe, [gerry@downtowndc.org](mailto:gerry@downtowndc.org)

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- 14) Can the condo owners who live along the Pa Ave receive hard copies of the designs with the information you presented today?

Pamela Martin, [Marketeast1@verizon.net](mailto:Marketeast1@verizon.net)

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- 15) Most hate the FBI building. I remember when the now loved Executive office building was hated. We Americans love to toss out our history. What should be saved?

William Cline, [wrc42@verizon.net](mailto:wrc42@verizon.net)

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- 16) Hany cited BLM Plaza. DDOT is planning to add car traffic back to that road segment and plans a mediocre ped/bike design that doesn't focus at all on lingering and programming. How do we prevent such reclamation on Penn Ave when powerful biz interests complain?

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 17) What makes anyone think the NPS neglect that resulted in the deterioration of the parks and public spaces would be any different in the future?

Anonymous Attendee

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- 18) Your action plan is only scoped for that Monumental Core section of Penn Ave NW. What about all those equity commitments you claim? Why is this a plan for only the already-privileged section of Penn?

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 19) Can this effort be and is it already defined as a cyclic design activity - that is engaged in a major way once per period. For example, is this effort an update of the area master-plan - an plan that is renewed every 50 years.

Jeffrey Luker, [Jluker@quinnevens.com](mailto:Jluker@quinnevens.com)

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- 20) Such a terribly disappointing cross-section, that seemed to consciously ignore the thousands of people who ride bicycles and micro mobility devices in the existing median lanes, the conflicts with crossing pedestrians that exist today, and seek to worsen those conflicts. Your presentations and polls all seem to ignore bicycle riders as stakeholders."

Darren Buck, darren.buck@dot.gov

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- 21) Any suggestions for how a restructuring PA Ave could benefit tourism through a more pleasant, shadier walk or biking between WH and Capitol (reducing the need for motor coach travel), with clean, safe restrooms, benches for sitting?

Maribeth Oakes, mbo6@verizon.net

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- 22) Can you please share the slides presented so that they may be circulated to our ANC and community? thank you.

Fredrica Kramer, 6d05@anc.dc.gov

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- 23) When I managed the retail section of the Old Post Office nearly 30 years ago, I viewed Pennsylvania Avenue as a river. East-West movement only took place during events and celebrations and North-South movement of people occurred throughout the year along the numbered streets. The Avenue needs people moving east and west and lingering along it for community and retail success. The Capitol Grille is the only long-term retail outlet along the roadway. How do you get people to linger? How can one use the breadth of Constitution Avenue to relieve the burdens of Pennsylvania Avenue?

Steve Shulman, sshulman@culturaltourismdc.org

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- 24) What are the left-hand turn things? Do you mean the dedicated phasing? Are you talking about the tactical street safety elements like left-hand turn hardening?

Gordon Chaffin, gchaffin@streetjustice.news

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- 25) You fail to acknowledge this segment of Penn Ave NW as The Central Link in a low-stress bicycle network, suitable for all ages and abilities of riders, that will stretch all the way from the southern District border (at Oxon Run) to Bethesda, Silver Spring, and other points at the northern District Border.

Darren Buck, darren.buck@dot.gov

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- 26) PADC designers were very interested in some sort of boulevard treatment that would plant in the middle and reduce vehicular lanes, but between the traffic engineers and the concerns for the parade route, it was never seriously considered.

Anonymous Attendee

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- 27) You apportion an additional 3 feet of clear width but introduce a whole new class and speed of user to the middle of the road. Your vision will deliver a degraded experience both to people on foot and people on bikes/scooters.

Darren Buck, [darren.buck@dot.gov](mailto:darren.buck@dot.gov)

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- 28) It should be noted that the Champs has terrible road surface and isn't very friendly for disabled folks or bike riders (unless you're spinning in the gutter pan)

Gordon Chaffin, [gchaffin@streetjustice.news](mailto:gchaffin@streetjustice.news)

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- 29) How do cars contribute to the context? Are they important?

Jeffrey Luker, [Jlucker@quinnevans.com](mailto:Jlucker@quinnevans.com)

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- 30) Can we eliminate cars altogether?

Jeffrey Luker, [Jlucker@quinnevans.com](mailto:Jlucker@quinnevans.com)

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- 31) Pennsylvania Avenue east of the Capitol has a lovely wide green median that could be looked at in thinking of Laurie Olin's idea.

Judy Scott Feldman, [jfeldman@nationalmallcoalition.org](mailto:jfeldman@nationalmallcoalition.org)

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- 32) The scale is very large - my sense is that pedestrians need help. We may need much better - and freely accessed people movers.

Jeffrey Luker, [Jlucker@quinnevans.com](mailto:Jlucker@quinnevans.com)

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- 33) One slide showed the state flag. Is there enough real estate to offer histories of each state proximate to the flag? Perhaps the states could support some retail presences.

JE Murdock III, [sandy\\_murdock@yahoo.com](mailto:sandy_murdock@yahoo.com)

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- 34) One of the challenges I find with the Avenue is that it is out of scale to the pedestrians and it confusion as to know where to go/ stop /cross safely etc. It's like a no-man's land most of the time. The restaurants that are there are dwarfed by the scale of the buildings and width of the road.

Ann English, [Ann.english@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Ann.english@montgomerycountymd.gov)

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- 35) Perhaps it would have helped the panelists address the accessibility and usability of the street for local residents, especially non-white locals, if any of them were one.

Anonymous Attendee

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36) We need many more shade trees - and more places for rest and recovery.

Jeffrey Luker, Jluker@quinnevans.com

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37) The state themes might be correlated with Marriage-like events. Great celebrations might add to tourism. 50 state Folk Life Events. Congress would love to have a place to come with the participants.

JE Murdock III, sandy\_murdock@yahoo.com

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38) I'm very happy to hear the discussions regarding diversity and inclusion, and I hope to see D&I further represented in future town halls/panel discussions/community engagement/etc., with regard to the membership of the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative

Gigi Nelson, 2c03@anc.dc.gov

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39) How do we care for people - restrooms, play areas, nourishment ...

Jeffrey Luker, Jluker@quinnevans.com

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40) JE, I was thinking of something similar to the 50 state folk life events. What are the most popular festivals, ethnicities, and foods of each state? Focus on one state at a time. What about past historical events of each year that could be highlighted? Pennsylvania Avenue also could focus on international events and festivals.

Jeannie Bellina, rbellina@verizon.net

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41) I love idea that the place might better care for and serve children and families, and the elderly.

Jeffrey Luker, Jluker@quinnevans.com

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42) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/pariss-champs-elysees-get-green-makeover-180976737/>

- a. Champs-Élysées is undergoing changes presently. A portion of it will be made pedestrian. Since this street is such a connector, any thoughts for transit?

Anonymous Attendee

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- 43) The original prospectus for the public space at the Old Post Office, proposed by Nancy Hanks, called for celebrating the arts—music, dance, craft, folk art, etc.—of each state within the building. Could that concept be revised, rejuvenated and moved outdoors?”

Steve Shulman, sshulman@culturaltourismdc.org

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- 44) The average person visits 7 states, outside of their own....let alone international countries. How can we bring the states or overseas countries to Pennsylvania Avenue?

Jeannie Bellina, rbellina@verizon.net

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- 45) Many thanks to each of you for the efforts.

Jeffrey Luker, Jluker@quinnevans.com

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- 46) Thank you all for this excellent panel presentation. Looking forward to seeing transformative changes take place on Pennsylvania Avenue by 2026.

Jeannie Bellina, rbellina@verizon.net

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- 47) Freedom plaza is actually one of the most vibrant public spaces downtown--lots of skateboarders etc. Maybe not intended use but lively, nevertheless.

Daniel Fox (CFA), dfox@cfa.gov

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- 48) Restoring the diagonal is not a good idea. The earlier layout was a disaster and did not create green park by the time traffic patterns were established.

Anonymous Attendee

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- 49) of course, Pershing Square just to the west of Freedom Plaza was just made completely barren pavement instead of the green space it had been... agreed also with Daniel that Freedom Plz could use more trees/shade but definitely very well used.

Anonymous Attendee

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- 50) Let's consider eliminating all east west traffic except public transit and bicycle, which could provide protection from the threat of vehicular bombs and would give flexibility for streetscape design.

John Parsons, John Parsons, parsonsjohng@gmail.com

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51) Any hotel along Pennsylvania Avenue should be moderately priced....a people's hotel for the People's Avenue.

Robert Frazier, rfm1@gmail.com

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52) More data like Heather Arnold less doctrine.

JE Murdock III, sandy\_murdock@yahoo.com