



Executive Director's Recommendation

Commission Meeting: September 3, 2020

PROJECT Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building Public Gathering Area Security Plan Modification 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC	NCPC FILE NUMBER 8129
SUBMITTED BY United States General Services Administration	NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER 1.41(38.40)45179
REVIEW AUTHORITY Federal Projects in the District per 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)	APPLICANT'S REQUEST Approval of comments on concept design
	PROPOSED ACTION Approve comments on concept design
	ACTION ITEM TYPE Staff Presentation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The United States General Services Administration (GSA) has submitted a concept design for the perimeter security improvements at Lot 9 of the Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building. The Commission previously approved perimeter security for the site in 2014 as part of the People's Garden project. The current proposal is a modification of the perimeter security line to incorporate the parking area (Lot 9) which also serves as the site of a seasonal farmers market. Constructed in 1930 for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Whitten Building is located in southwest Washington, DC on the National Mall. It is the only Cabinet-level building on the National Mall, and holds the office of the Secretary of Agriculture. The USDA has undertaken a security assessment and identified the area as a concern to be addressed. The purpose of the project is to incorporate Lot 9 within the security perimeter.

The Whitten Building is bounded by Jefferson Drive to the north, Independence Avenue to the south, 12th Street to the east, and 14th Street to the west. Lot 9 is located on the east side of the building at the corner of Independence Avenue and 12th Street, adjacent to the Smithsonian Metrorail Station elevator. Lot 9 serves as an employee parking lot with approximately forty-seven spaces and three curb cuts along 12th Street. Lot 9 also hosts the weekly USDA Farmers Market during the summer and fall, attracting large groups of people. The seasonal market takes place every Friday, for six months from May through October. Since 1995, USDA has operated the farmers market at the USDA headquarters. The farmers market is the Department's own "living laboratory" for farmers market operations across the country.

In 2014, the Commission approved a perimeter security plan for the entire USDA complex, but the plan has not yet been implemented. USDA has installed temporary water-filled barriers around Lot 9 since 2018 to protect the farmers market. The proposed project would move the originally-approved perimeter security line approximately 70 feet to the east, thereby expanding the secure

area. A series of bollards will be used as protective measures around this portion of the site. Other site improvements include removing 15 parking spaces for circulation and landscape purposes; removing the south curb cut to reduce intersection congestion and increase planting area; converting the south vehicular entrance into a pedestrian only access; and expanding the width of the vegetation beds from three to twelve feet along 12th Street. The landscape plan incorporates hedges and groundcover plantings.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Whitten Building is the only federal office building on the National Mall. The building has served as the office of the Secretary of Agriculture, a Cabinet-level position, since its completion in 1930. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The north landscape was designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm who tailored the plantings to complement their vision for the greater National Mall.
- The remaining buildings on the National Mall are museums. Their perimeter security lines are generally located near the public sidewalks to incorporate the building yards and other gathering spaces.
- The Commission approved perimeter security plans for the Level IV USDA headquarters complex in May 2004 and June 2014, but these plans have not been implemented due to lack of funding.
- The 2004 perimeter security plan included the Yates Building and Cotton Annex in addition to the Whitten and South Buildings. The 2004 plan included hundreds of bollards at the edge of the building yard concealed within a hedge.
- The 2014 People's Garden site improvements and perimeter security plan for the USDA Headquarters, which includes the Whitten and South Buildings, expanded the People's Garden theme across the USDA grounds. The plan included low impact development practices, integrated Level IV perimeter security within the landscape to minimize visual impacts, and reduced parking significantly. The perimeter security line was closer to the building to create a sense of openness and the use of bollards was limited.
- The only project that has been submitted to the Commission since the 2014 approval is the preliminary and final site development plans for six retractable bollards at the north entrance motor court of the Whitten Building, which was approved by the Commission in May 2018. The bollards have yet to be installed.
- The previously approved perimeter security for Lot 9 included a reinforced rail system located near the existing moat that surrounds the Whitten Building. It also included hardened structures, such as a farmers market canopy and raised planting beds.
- USDA has indicated that the Lot 9 parking area and farmers market should be incorporated into the security perimeter. The proposed concept moves the previously approved security line away from the building and installs bollards closer to the sidewalk.
- The United States General Services Administration has jurisdiction over both the Whitten and South Buildings. The National Park Service maintains jurisdiction over the north lawn of the Whitten Building as well as the sidewalks and tree beds along Jefferson Drive.
- The current proposal returns to the 2004 perimeter security location and design approach.
- Since 2014, USDA conducted a survey and concluded that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Smithsonian Metrorail Station was approximately six

feet below ground, which creates limited soil depth and requires shallow perimeter security footings. Therefore, the previously proposed cable reinforced fence system is not feasible because it requires deep foundations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission:

Notes that in 2014, the Commission approved preliminary site development plans for the People's Garden site improvements and perimeter security at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) headquarters complex, including the Jamie L. Whitten and South Buildings.

Notes that the 2014 plan for the 20-acre site included integration of low impact development practices and Level IV perimeter security elements into the landscape design, and a significant reduction of on-site parking. The use of bollards was limited, and the proposed design honored the historic Olmsted Brothers' landscape.

Notes the 2014 plan included a design for the farmers market (Lot 9), located on the east court of the Whitten Building, which proposed eliminating the existing parking lot and converting it into a permeable paved plaza, incorporating a curvilinear walkway to reference the original Olmstead design, and expanding the Lincoln teaching garden. The perimeter security consisted of a cable railing system adjacent to the building and hardened structures such as a canopy and raised planting beds.

Finds that the current proposal for Lot 9 is inconsistent with the previously-approved 2014 plan because it moves the perimeter security line and proposes bollards instead of a cable rail system.

Notes that the applicant is still committing to implement the rest of the 2014 plan as funding permits.

Perimeter Security Need and Location

Notes that USDA has prepared a risk assessment and proposal to incorporate Lot 9 within the security perimeter of the site.

Notes the site is home to the office of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, the only Cabinet-level agency located on the National Mall.

Notes that the proposed location of perimeter security has moved about 70 feet to the east of the previously-approved location to incorporate Lot 9 and the site of the farmers market.

Finds that while similar seasonal farmers markets throughout the District do not have permanent security measures, several museums on the National Mall, due to their prominent location and high

visitation volume, locate permanent security at the property line to protect plazas and large areas of public gathering.

Supports providing amenities for federal workers and the surrounding community on, and around, federal sites to enhance and activate the public realm.

Perimeter Security and Landscape Design

Notes the 2014 plan approved by the Commission included a cable railing system which would require substantial footings. Since that time, the applicant has determined the cable-reinforced fence system previously approved would require deep footings that conflict with the Metrorail tunnel that passes below the site.

Notes the applicant proposes to replace the cable railing perimeter security approach from the 2014 plan with bollards for perimeter security around Lot 9. The bollard system would include shallow foundations that would accommodate limited space over the tunnel.

Notes the proposed bollards will be hidden from the surrounding public sidewalks by landscape plantings in an attempt to reduce their visual impact.

Requests the applicant evaluate whether alternative perimeter security approaches are viable along the north side of the parking area, given the character of the adjacent NPS gardens and the distance from the street.

Requests the applicant provide at the next review a detailed landscape plan and palette and confirmation that any trees or plantings shown above or near the below-grade WMATA station will be viable given the shallow soil conditions.

Notes that one of the mitigation measures included in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the 2014 plan, which was executed on June 4, 2015, required the applicant to restore elements of the historic landscape plan designed by the Olmstead Brothers in 1931, including the curvilinear walkway for Lot 9, which has been eliminated with the proposed project.

Requests that the applicant conduct additional Section 106 consultation to ensure that the proposed design for Lot 9 does not preclude implementation of the agreed upon mitigation measures. If it does, it may require a possible amendment to the executed memorandum of agreement, which will expire in 2035.

Parking Removal

Notes that the proposed design removes 15 parking spaces from Lot 9 which is currently a 47-space surface lot.

Supports the removal of parking and increase in landscaping, consistent with the intent of the 2014 plan.

Requests the applicant evaluate the possibility of removing all the parking to provide more flexibility for events and improve the character of the site, consistent with the 2014 plan.

Other Coordination

Requests the applicant coordinate with WMATA to ensure that the proposed improvements do not create conflicts with the underground station and tunnel.

Requests the applicant coordinate with NPS regarding the north line of the perimeter security to avoid impacts to areas under NPS jurisdiction.

Requests the applicant coordinate with the National Mall Streetscape Manual Interagency Working Group, as plans and details are developed to improve the streetscape surrounding the USDA headquarters complex and develop consistency among the streets within and around the National Mall.

PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

Previous actions	<p>May 3, 2018 – Approval of preliminary and final site development plans for the installation of six retractable bollards across the driveways that access the motor court along Jefferson Drive, SW at the USDA Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building.</p> <p>June 5, 2014 – Approval of preliminary site development plans for the People’s Garden site improvements and perimeter security at the USDA headquarters complex. The project has not yet been implemented.</p> <p>May 6, 2004 – Approval of perimeter security concept design for the USDA headquarters complex. The project was not implemented.</p>
Remaining actions (anticipated)	Review revised preliminary site development plans for the People’s Garden site improvements and perimeter security

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The current proposal is a modification of the perimeter security line to incorporate Lot 9, which also serves as the site of a seasonal farmers market. Constructed in 1930 for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Whitten Building is located in southwest, Washington, DC on the National Mall. It is the only cabinet-level building on the National Mall, and holds the office of the Secretary of Agriculture. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic

Places. The north landscape was designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm who tailored the plantings to complement their vision for the greater National Mall.

In 2014, the Commission approved a perimeter security plan for the entire USDA complex, but the plan has not yet been implemented. Since 2018, USDA installed temporary water filled barriers around Lot 9 to protect the farmers market. Due to an updated assessment, the proposed project would move the originally-approved perimeter security line approximately 70 feet to the east. A series of bollards would be used as protective measures around this portion of the site. Other improvements include the removal of 15 parking spaces for circulation and landscape purposes; removing the south curb cut to reduce intersection congestion and increase planting area; converting the south vehicular entrance into a pedestrian only access; and expanding the width of the vegetation beds from three to twelve feet along 12th Street. The landscape plan incorporates hedges and groundcover plantings. The applicant is still committed to implementing the rest of the 2014 plan as funding permits.

Analysis

USDA has prepared a risk assessment and proposes to incorporate Lot 9 within the security perimeter of the site. While similar seasonal markets throughout the city do not have permanent security measures, the majority of the museums on the National Mall, due to their prominent location and high visitation volume, locate permanent security at the property line to protect plazas and large areas of public gatherings and activities. Further, the use of federal building sites for public activities events is supported by many policies within the Comprehensive Plan. The modification of perimeter security to include the farmers market will allow this and other activities to occur on-site, and to promote the mission of the USDA.

Comparison to 2014 Plan

In 2014, Commission approved preliminary site development plans for the People's Garden site improvements and perimeter security at the USDA complex, including the Jamie L. Whitten and South Buildings. The plan included integration of low impact development practices and Level IV perimeter security elements into the landscape design, and a significant reduction of on-site parking. The use of bollards was limited, and the proposed design honored the historic Olmsted Brothers' landscape.

The 2014 plan for the farmers market (Lot 9), located on the east court of the Whitten Building, proposed eliminating the existing parking lot and converting it into a permeable paved plaza, incorporating a curvilinear walkway to reference the original Olmsted design, and expanding the Lincoln teaching garden. The perimeter security consisted of a cable railing system adjacent to the building and hardened structures such as a canopy and raised planting beds.

The current proposal for Lot 9 deviates from the 2014 plan because it moves the perimeter security line approximately 70 feet to the east to incorporate Lot 9. In addition, bollards are proposed in lieu of a cable rail system. The 2014 plan also included the removal of all parking. The current proposal reduces parking by about 15 spaces, but 32 will remain. Staff finds that other aspects of

the proposed design are positive, including the conversion of south vehicular entrance to an expanded curbside planter; expansion of vegetation beds from 3' to 10' width along 12th Street, SW; and restoration of the tree canopy (eight trees) along 12th Street.

Proposed Design

USDA has stated that the cable reinforced fence system previously approved would require deep footings that conflict with the Metrorail tunnel that cuts below the site. The bollard system would include shallow foundations that would accommodate limited space over the tunnel. In general, staff finds the proposed bollards will likely be screened from the surrounding public sidewalks by landscape plantings. The location of the bollards along with edge of the parking will also avoid any conflicts with root zones and the soil volume for plantings.

The open space along the north side of the property is maintained by the National Park Service. Currently, the area is programmed with a garden. Given the proximity of the proposed security elements to NPS lands, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant coordinate with the National Park Service regarding the north line of the perimeter security to avoid impacts to areas under NPS jurisdiction.** Further, given the different character of this area, including the planter boxes and gardens, it may be helpful to consider whether different security measures might be appropriate, including benches or other landscape features. The north perimeter is also much further from the street compared to the other sides. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant evaluate whether alternative perimeter security approaches are viable along the north side of the parking area, given the character of the adjacent NPS gardens and the distance from the street.**

In general, staff finds the increase in landscape plantings and trees will be beneficial. As these are critical to mitigating the visual impact of the security measures and in providing shade around the site, additional information about the proposed plantings will be necessary. Further, due to the spatial constraints noted previously due to the WMATA tunnel and station, it will be helpful to confirm that any proposed trees will be viable in the propose locations. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission requests the applicant provide at the next review, a detailed landscape plan and palette and confirmation that any trees or plantings shown above or near the below-grade WMATA station will be viable given the shallow soil conditions.**

One of the mitigation measures included in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) prepared pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for the 2014 plan, which was executed on June 4, 2015, required the applicant to restore elements of the historic landscape plan designed by the Olmstead Brothers in 1931, including the curvilinear walkway for Lot 9, which has been eliminated with the proposed project. As such, it will be necessary to re-address this issue. Therefore, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant conduct additional Section 106 consultation to ensure that the proposed design for Lot 9 does not preclude implementation of the agreed upon mitigation measures. If it does, it may require a possible amendment to the executed memorandum of agreement, which will expire in 2035.**

Parking Removal

As noted previously, that the proposed design removes 15 parking spaces from the existing lot, leaving 32 parking spaces. The 2014 plan proposed to eliminate all of the parking. Staff recommend the **Commission supports the removal of parking and increase in landscaping, consistent with the intent of the 2014 plan.** Given the location of the site on the National Mall, the historic character of the building and the context, as well as the first impression for those exiting the Smithsonian Metro Station, the eliminating of the parking lot should remain the ultimate goal. Eliminating the remaining 32 parking spaces could open up the site to additional programming, landscaping and permeable treatments. It may also help address the mitigation set forth in the MOA described previously. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant evaluate the possibility of removing all the parking to provide more flexibility for events and improve the character of the site, consistent with the 2014 plan.**

Other Coordination

Given the several jurisdictions and complex challenges of the site, additional coordination will be helpful in affirming some of the proposed design elements. As such, staff recommends the **Commission request the applicant coordinate with WMATA to ensure that the proposed improvements and trees do not create conflicts with the underground station and tunnel; request the applicant coordinate with the National Park Service regarding the north line of the perimeter security to avoid impacts to areas under NPS jurisdiction; and further request the applicant coordinate with the National Mall Streetscape Manual Interagency Working Group, as plans and details are developed to improve the streetscape surrounding the USDA headquarters complex and develop consistency among the streets within and around the National Mall.**

CONFORMANCE TO EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES AND RELATED GUIDANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The analysis and recommendations above are intended to support the basic goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff evaluated consistency with policies set forth in the Environment and Urban Design Elements.

National Historic Preservation Act

GSA and NCPC each have an independent responsibility to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The 2014 project resulted in the preparation of an MOA pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA. As noted previously, additional consultation will be required to address

any changes to the design or potential mitigation. On October 31, 2019, GSA reinitiated consultation with the DC State Historic Preservation Officer (DC SHPO).

National Environmental Policy Act

GSA and NCPC each have an independent responsibility to comply with the in the National Environmental Policy Act. An Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact were prepared for the 2014 People's Garden project. GSA and NCPC will evaluate the level of NEPA required prior to the next submission.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal at its November 13, 2019 meeting and again on August 12, 2020. The Committee forwarded the proposed concept plans to the Commission with the statement that the proposal has been coordinated with some of the participating agencies, including NPS, GSA, District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), District Office of Energy and Environment and WMATA. DDOT asked GSA to reaffirm that no work was planned in the public rights-of-way WMATA requested that GSA continue coordination to ensure no impacts to the underground Metrorail station. The SHPO coordinated subject to completion of the Section 106 process.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts

The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts reviewed the project at their November 21, 2019 meeting, and approved the proposal as a consent item.

ONLINE REFERENCE

The following supporting documents for this project are available online at www.ncpc.gov:

- Submission Package

Prepared by Matthew Flis
August 27, 2020

POWERPOINT (ATTACHED)

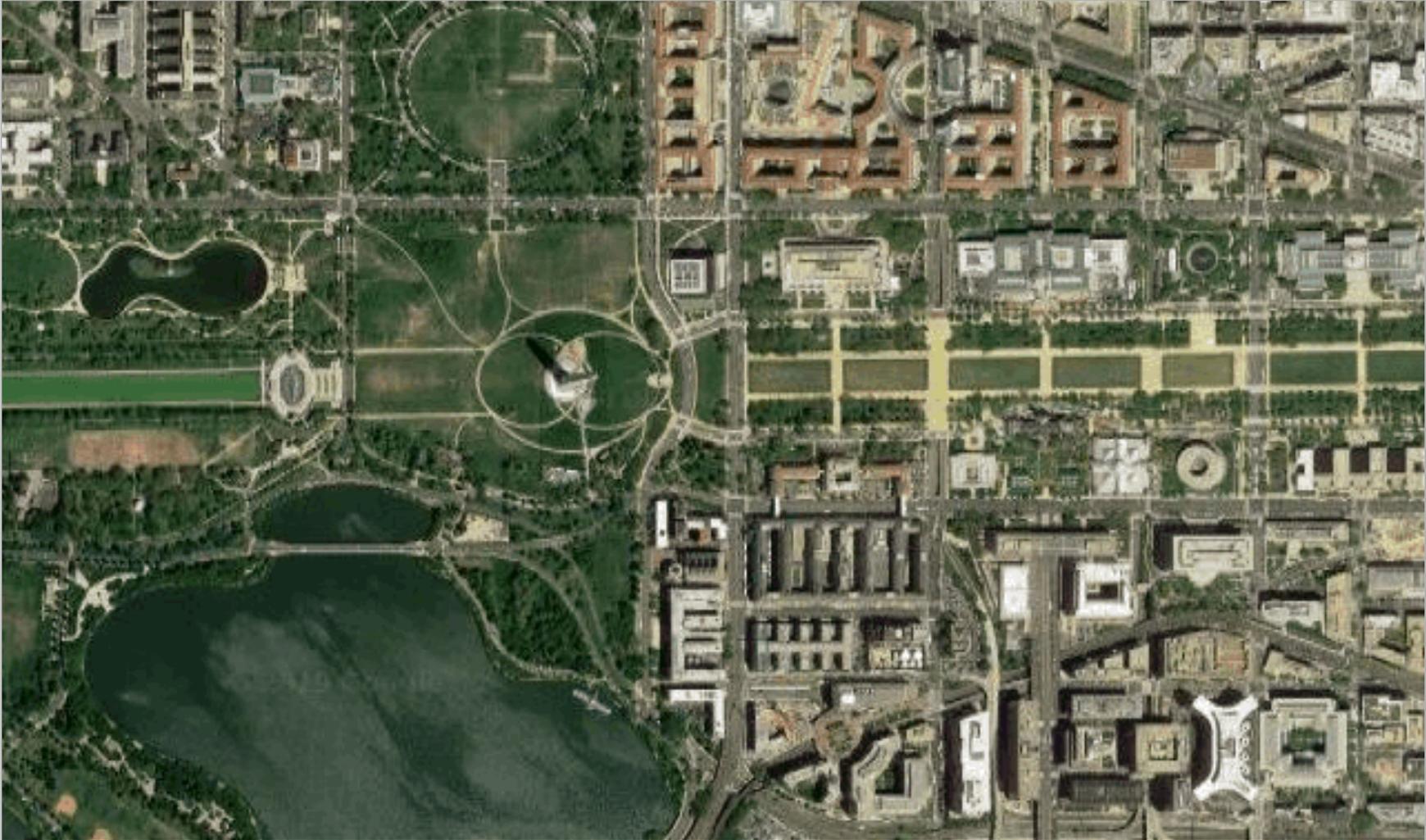
USDA Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building Public Gathering Area Security Plan Modification

1400 Jefferson Drive, SW, Washington DC

Concept Review

United States General Services Administration

Site Location



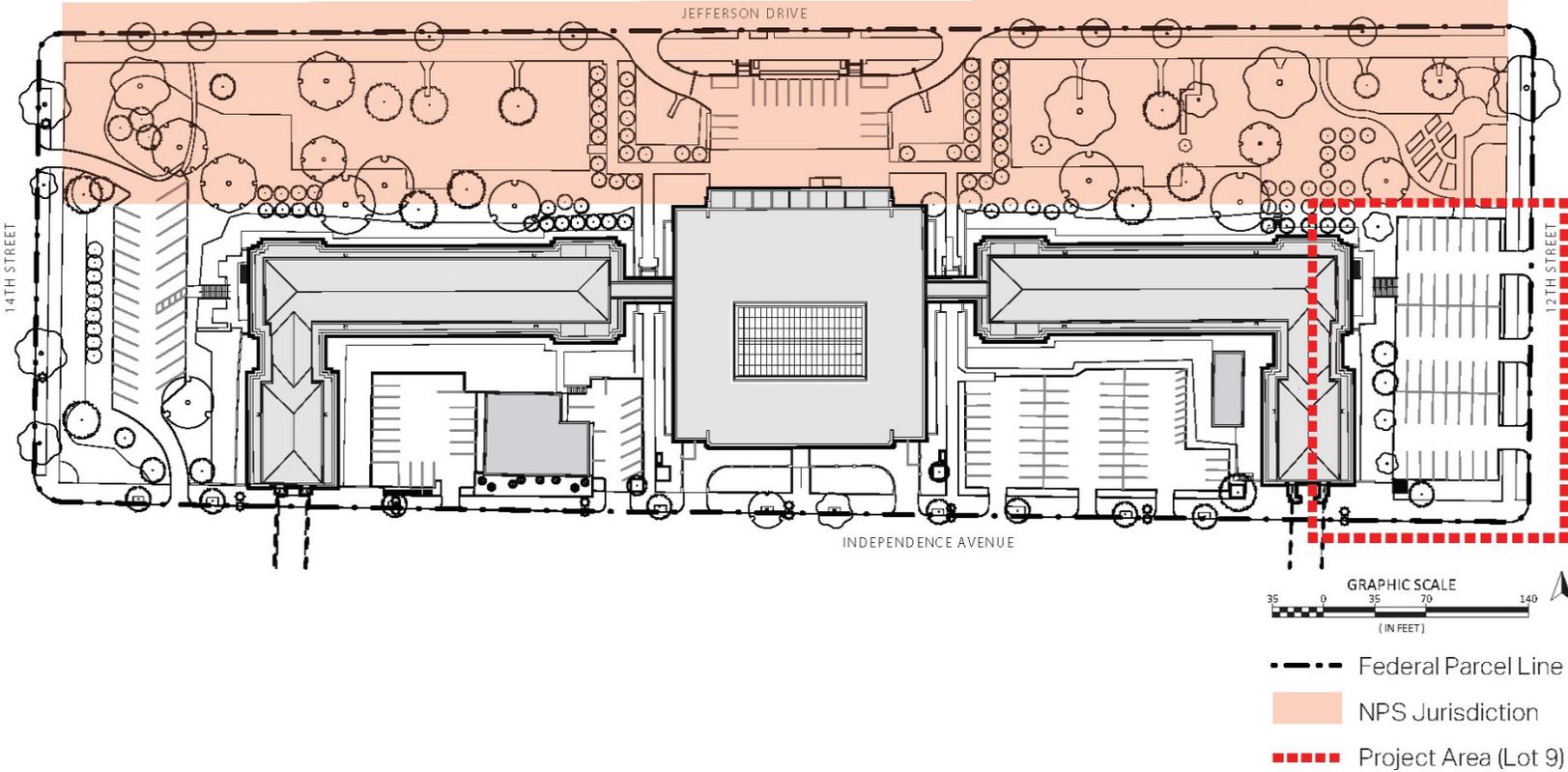
Location Map

Site and Project Area



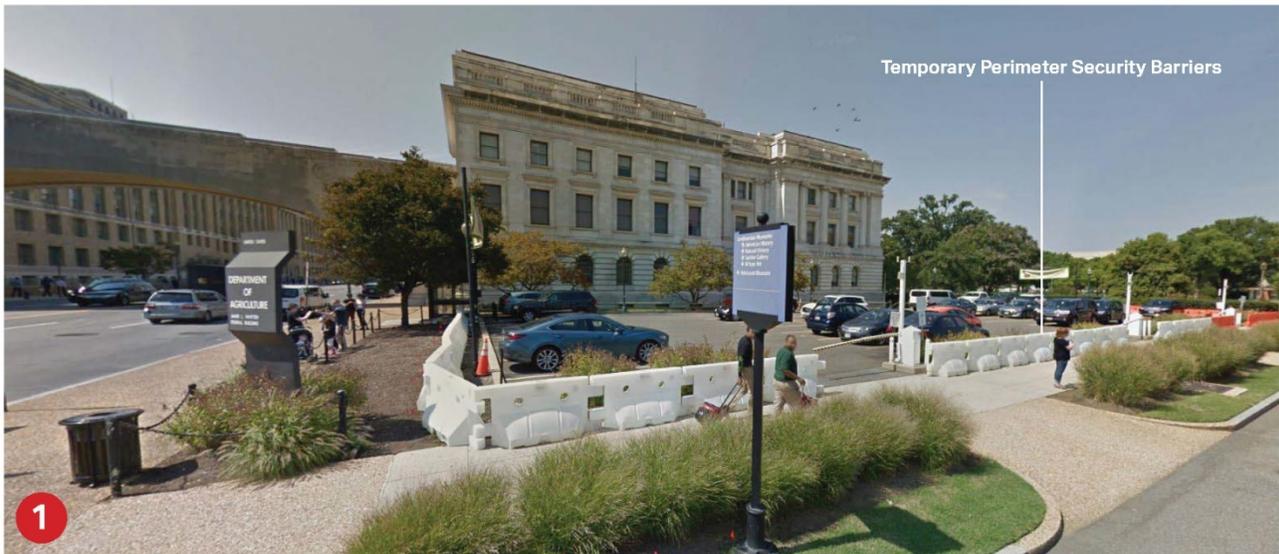
The Jamie L. Whitten Building is the only Presidential Cabinet-level agency headquarters located on the National Mall. The building and its yard, which includes the project area in the southeast portion, is adjacent to other USDA facilities, Smithsonian Institutions, and the National Mall. The Whitten Building and yard is bound by 14th and 12th Street, Jefferson Drive, and Independence Avenue.

Existing Site Plan

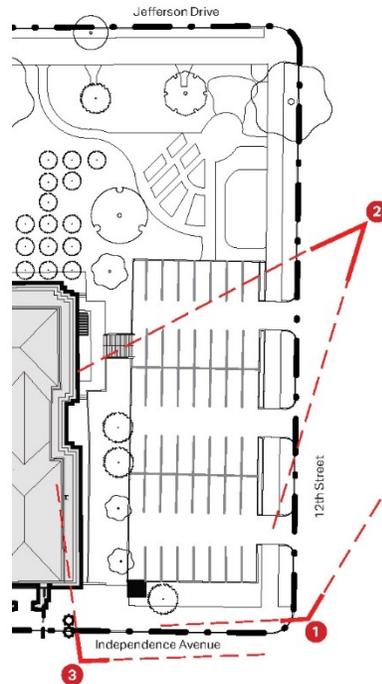


The existing plan illustrates the federal parcel line of the site, which is essentially the street curb along the perimeter of the site. The north lawn of the Whitten Building parcel, between the northern building face and Jefferson Drive, is under National Park Service (NPS) jurisdiction. The Lot 9 project area currently functions as a parking lot to the east of the Whitten Building, and is adjacent to the National Park Service property that functions as a demonstration garden to the north. Because the federal parcel line extends to the curb, none of the project area is within public space.

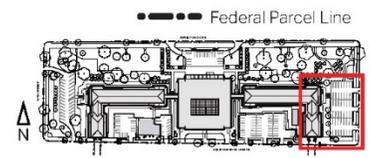
Existing Conditions – Typical Day



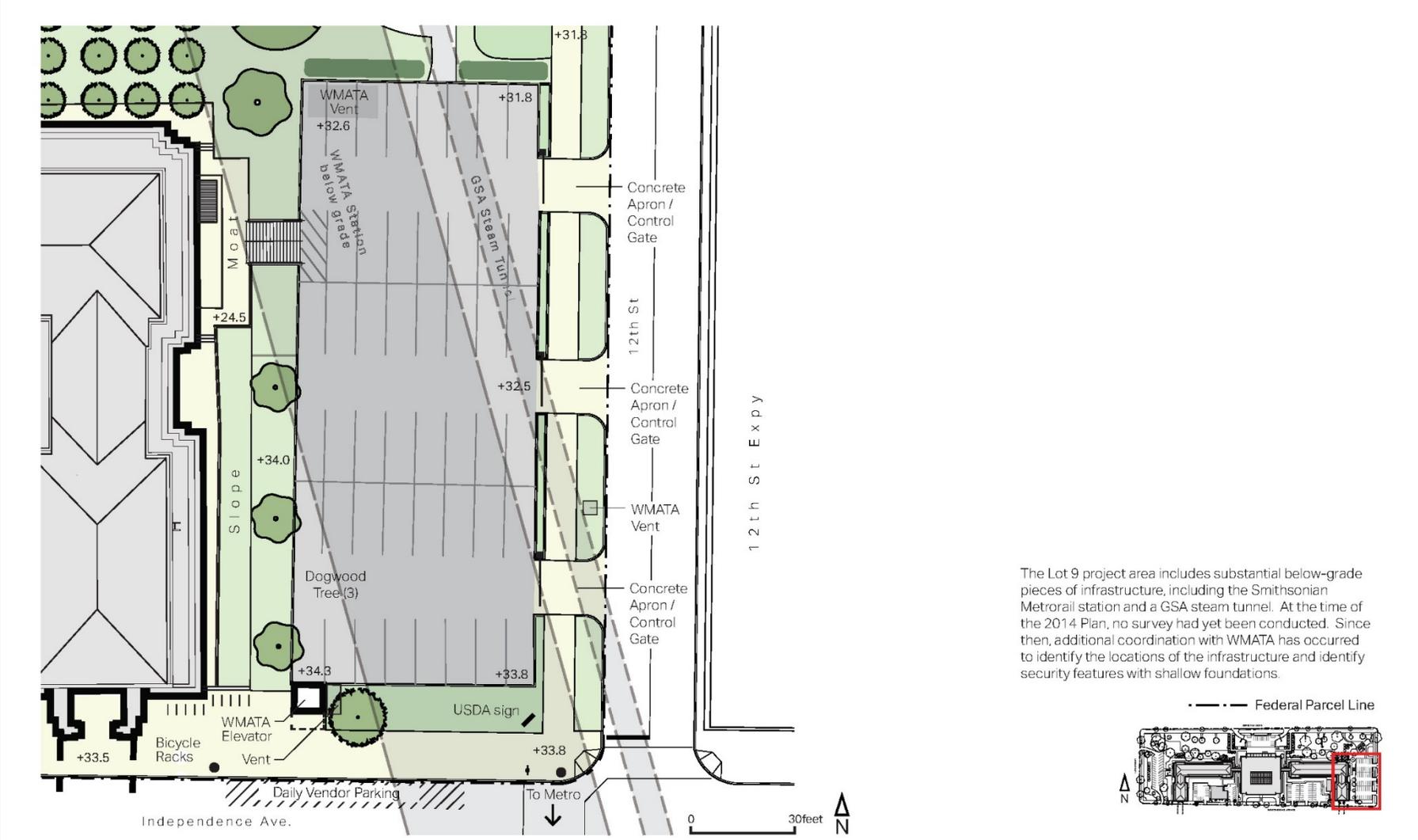
Temporary Perimeter Security Barriers



Throughout the week, except Fridays in May through October, the parking lot serves as employee parking with 47 spaces. These photos also show the temporary water-filled security barriers currently used to protect the farmers market. They are installed the first Friday in May and stay until the last Friday in October.

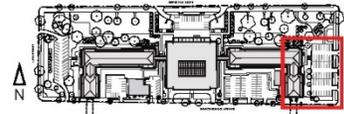


Enlarged Existing Plan

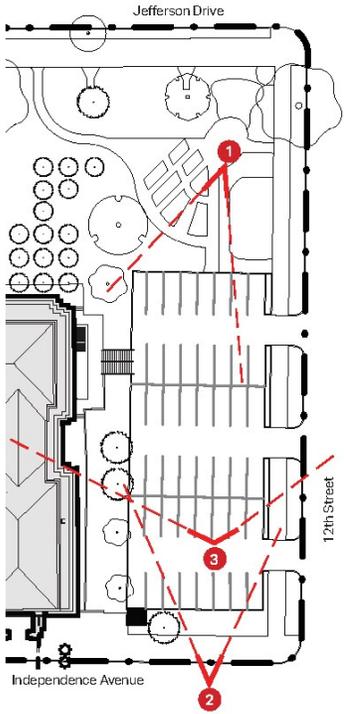


The Lot 9 project area includes substantial below-grade pieces of infrastructure, including the Smithsonian Metrorail station and a GSA steam tunnel. At the time of the 2014 Plan, no survey had yet been conducted. Since then, additional coordination with WMATA has occurred to identify the locations of the infrastructure and identify security features with shallow foundations.

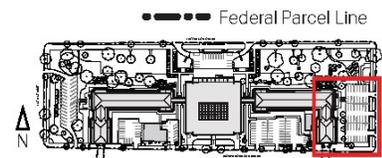
--- Federal Parcel Line



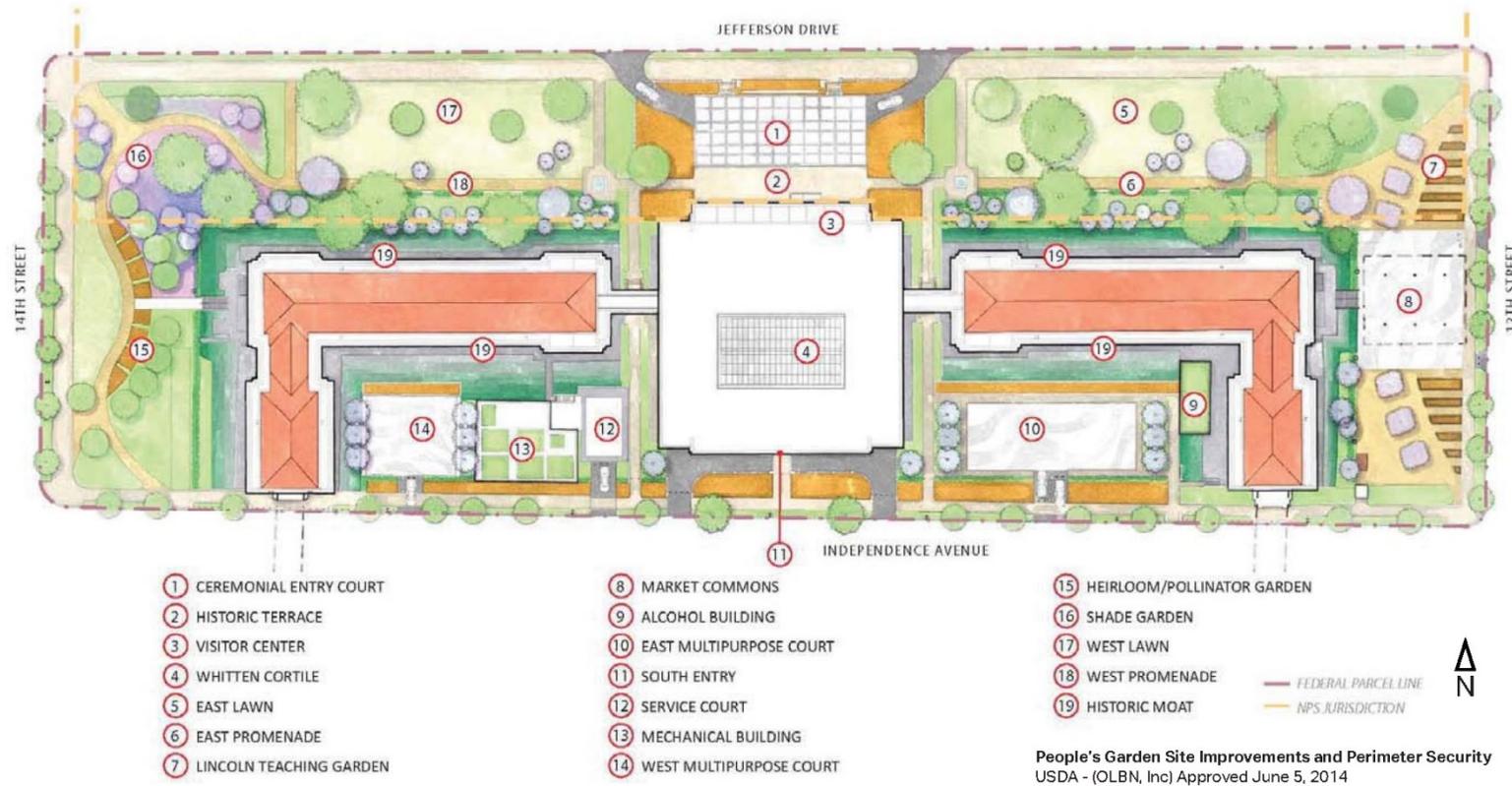
Existing Conditions – Farmer’s Market



The project area is dominated by a parking lot that is transformed on Fridays during the spring, summer, and fall into a farmers market. The USDA does not currently have an official count of participants, but is in the process of developing a system to count the number of visitors. In addition to the farmers market, Lot 9 is also used for the Smithsonian’s Summer Folklife Festival.



2014 – Approved Plan



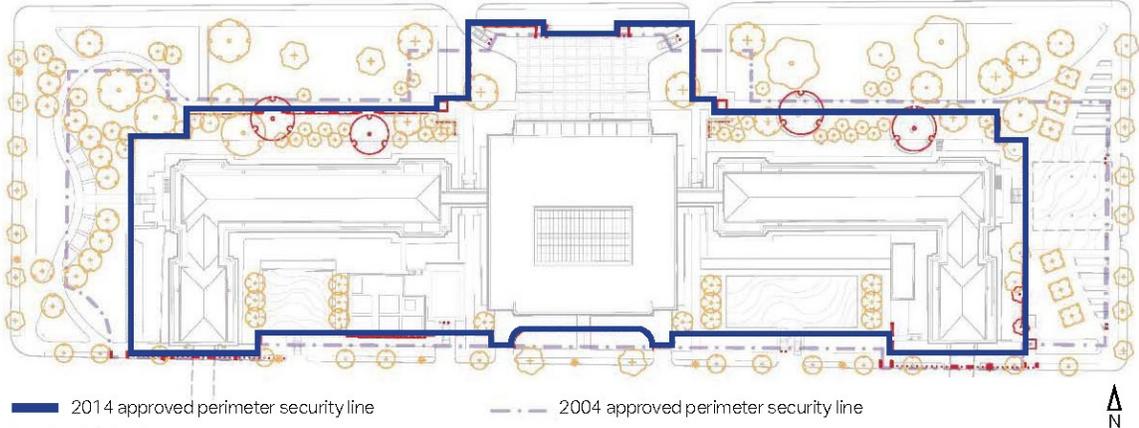
The Commission reviewed and approved the preliminary site development plan for the People's Garden site improvements and perimeter security at USDA Headquarters Complex on June 5, 2014. Within the project area, the 2014 Plan calls for a market commons, a bioretention garden, and a landscaped area featuring raised planting beds, storage structure, and three tree planters. The market commons would include a pavilion structure and a permeable granite cobble surface that could offer parking for events. The plan would reduce the number of curb cuts from three to two, providing mid-block vehicular access leading to the market commons.

The 2014 Plan also identified a bioretention garden near the Whitten Building and permeable pavement at the market commons. At the time of the 2014 Plan's development, the location of the Metrorail station was unknown. The subsequent identification of the station's depth indicates that these efforts to address stormwater management should be re-evaluated.

The proposed plan would adapt multiple elements of the 2014 Plan:

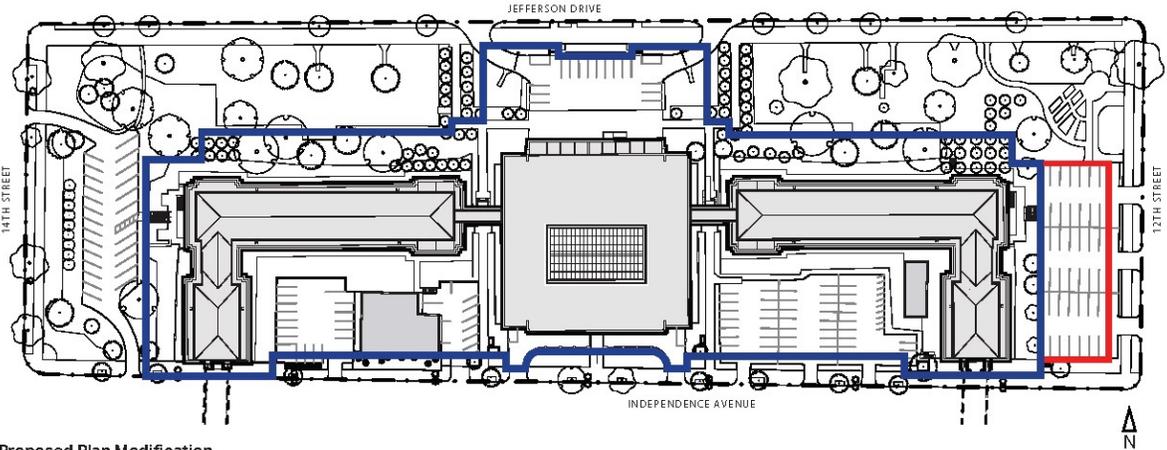
- Reduction of curb cuts from two to three
- Reduction in the number of parking spaces from 47 to 32
- Continued use of parking lot for market and special events
- Installation of eight street trees along 12th Street

Approved and Proposed Perimeter Security



People's Garden Site Improvements and Perimeter Security
 USDA - (OLBN, Inc) Approved June 5, 2014

The "Concept and Improvements and Perimeter Security Plan" provides protection for facilities with minimal protection for outdoor activities where large crowds gather.



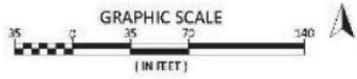
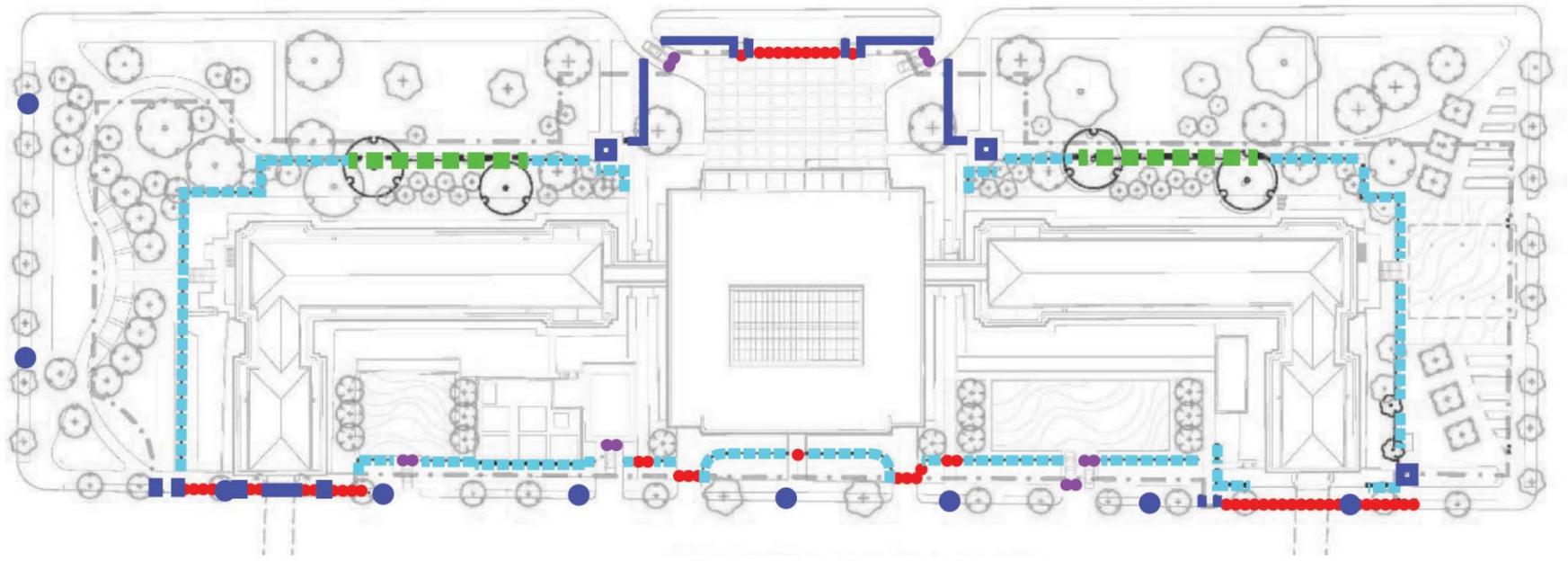
Proposed Plan Modification
 USDA - November, 2018

USDA wishes to deviate from the "Concept and Improvements and Perimeter Security Plan" and extend the crash barriers to protect Lot #9 which is the site of the USDA Farmer's Market

The Commission reviewed and approved the preliminary site development plan for the People's Garden site improvements and perimeter security at USDA Headquarters Complex in June 2014. The approved perimeter security line was close to the building and protected facilities. The proposed perimeter security would add protection for outdoor gathering activities in addition to the USDA facilities.

- Proposed Expansion of Security Measure
- 2014 Approved Perimeter Security Extents
- · - · - Federal Parcel Line

2014 Plan – Perimeter Security Typologies

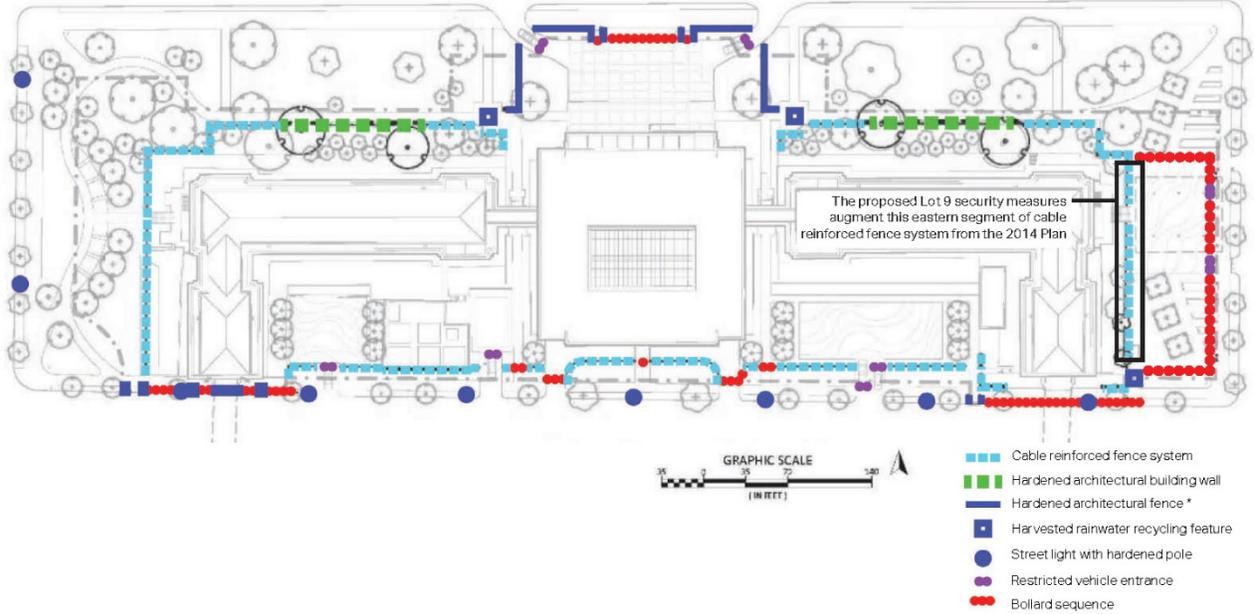


- - - Cable reinforced fence system
- - - Hardened architectural building wall
- Hardened architectural fence *
- Harvested rainwater recycling feature
- Street light with hardened pole
- Restricted vehicle entrance
- Bollard sequence

The diagram shown on this page illustrates USDA's 2014 Perimeter Security Plan. The cable reinforced fence system hews closely to the Whitten Building, and serves as the primary perimeter security typology at the site. The 2014 Plan does not include perimeter security measures for the gathering space within the Lot 9 area.

* Note this typology was not identified in the original 2014 diagram, but was identified in additional graphics included in the plan.

Proposed Perimeter Security Modification



The diagram shown on this page illustrates USDA's proposed perimeter security measures surrounding the gathering space within the Lot 9 area overlaid on the 2014 Perimeter Security Plan.

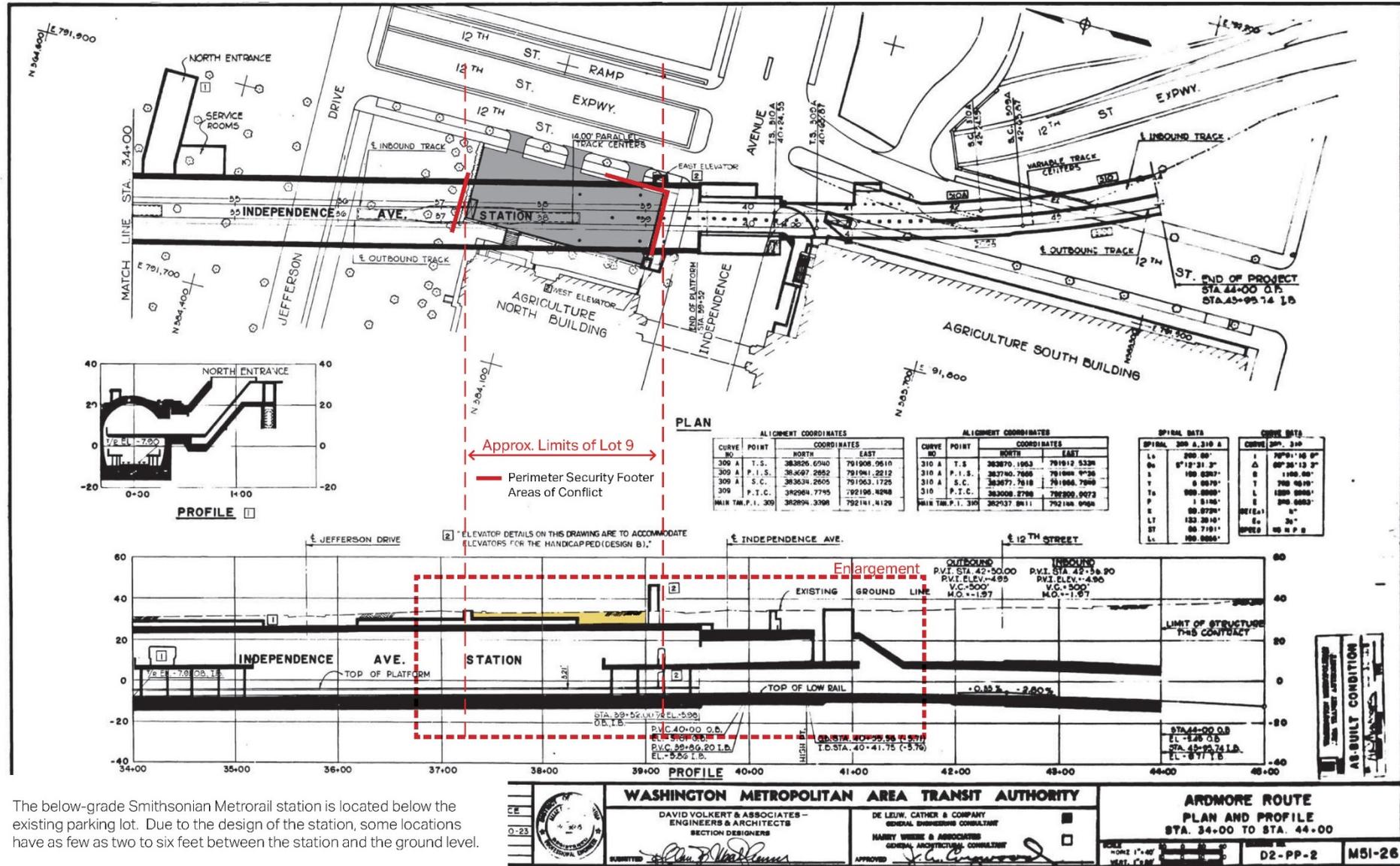
* Note this typology was not identified in the original 2014 diagram, but was identified in additional graphics or text included in the plan. In addition, the plan described the use of hardened planters and the market canopy as additional perimeter security measures on the east side of the site, outside the perimeter security line.

Perimeter Security Typologies of the 2014 Plan and Lot 9 Modification

Revised Concept Review 13

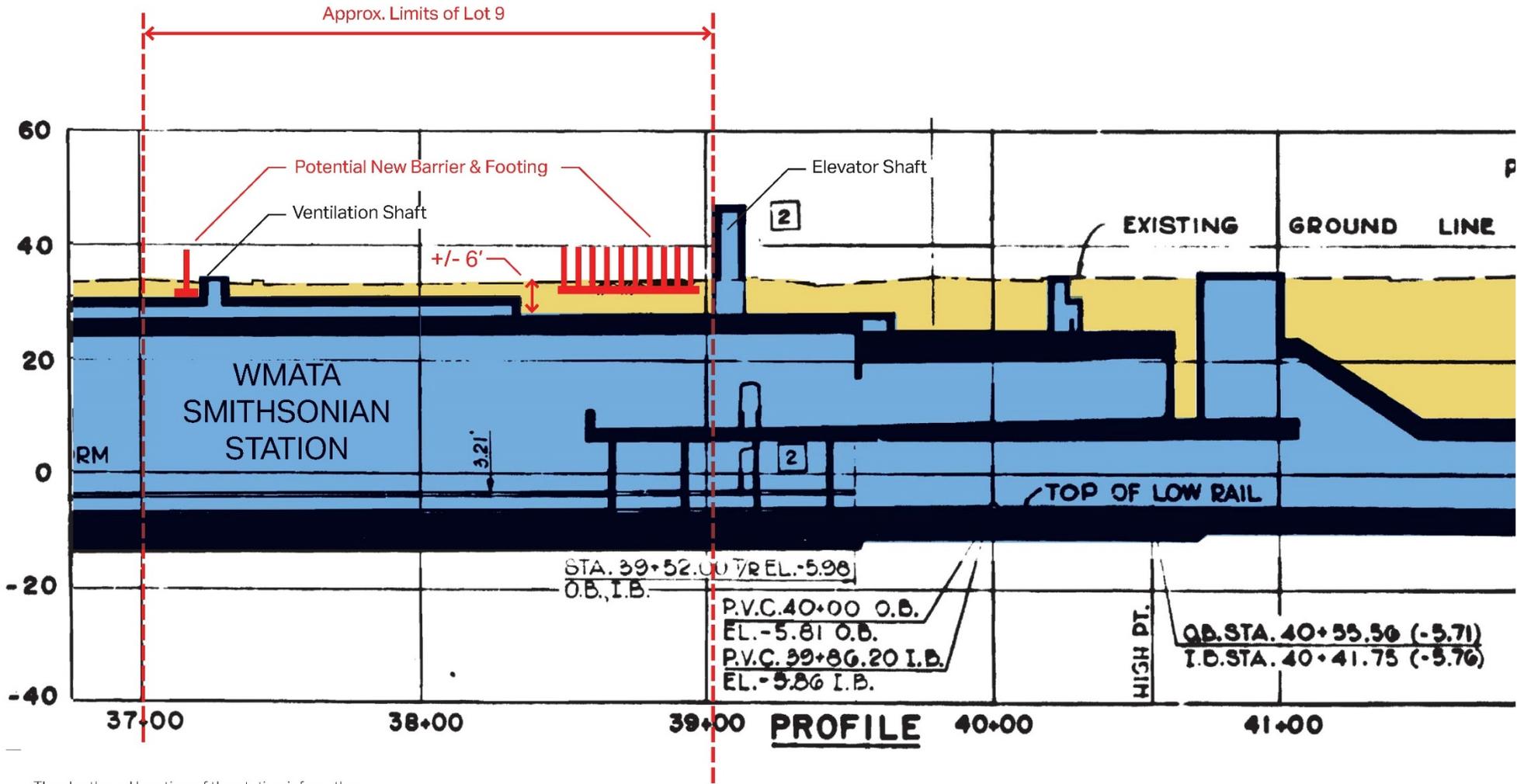
USDA Jamie L. Whitten Building - Public Gathering Area Security Plan Modification

Below-grade Conditions



The below-grade Smithsonian Metrorail station is located below the existing parking lot. Due to the design of the station, some locations have as few as two to six feet between the station and the ground level.

Site Section – Metro Station



The depth and location of the station inform the placement and types of potential barriers at the site.

Soil Depth WMATA station extents



Bollard and Boulder System - National Museum of the American Indian



Seat wall and Planter - National Museum of the American Indian



Architectonic Wall System - National Museum of American History



Segmented Wall/Planter System - National Air and Space Museum



Bollard and Berm System - Mary E. Switzer Building



Architectonic Fence System - Bureau of Engraving and Printing



Cable Reinforced Fence System (installation) - National Museum of Natural History

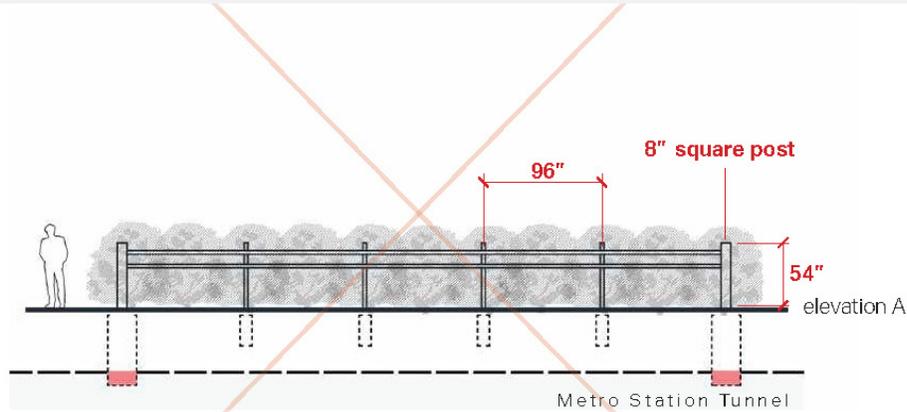


Cable Reinforced Fence System concealed in evergreen hedge (maturity) - National Museum of Natural History

GSA and USDA evaluated multiple perimeter security options within the District of Columbia, particularly in the vicinity of the project area. Many of these facilities extend the perimeter directly to the sidewalk.

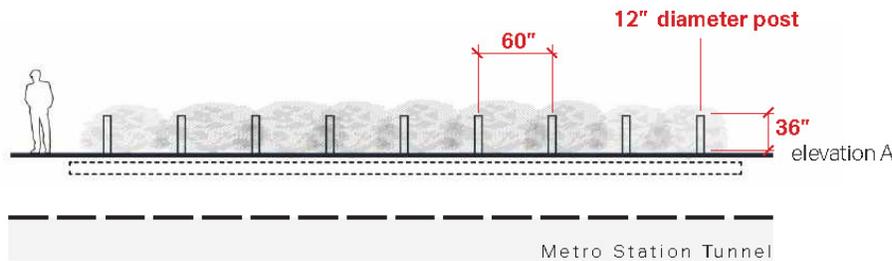
Perimeter Security Typologies

Perimeter Security Approaches



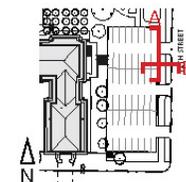
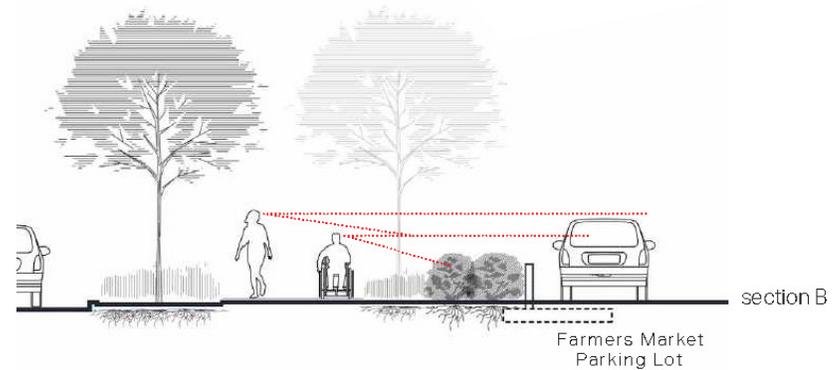
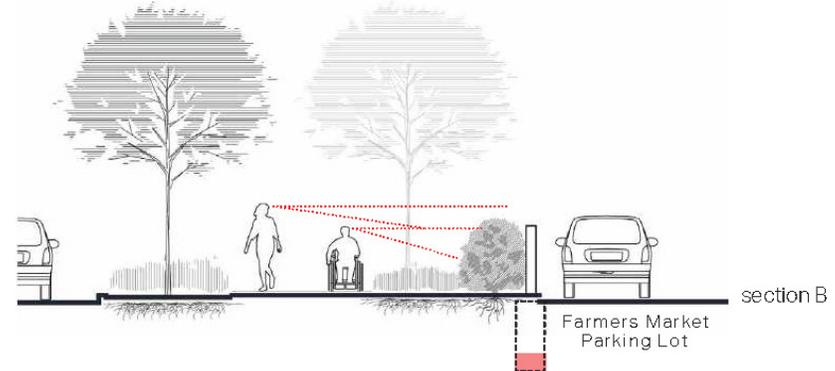
Cable Reinforced Fence System - posts 8" square, *National Museum of Natural History*

- Requires deep foundations that exceed available depth below grade
- Post height of 54" requires taller shrub to screen from view
- Taller shrub of 60" occludes pedestrian visibility
- Less adaptable to future site changes - major portions of system would need replaced



Bollard system - 12" diameter post, 36" height, 5'-0" on center

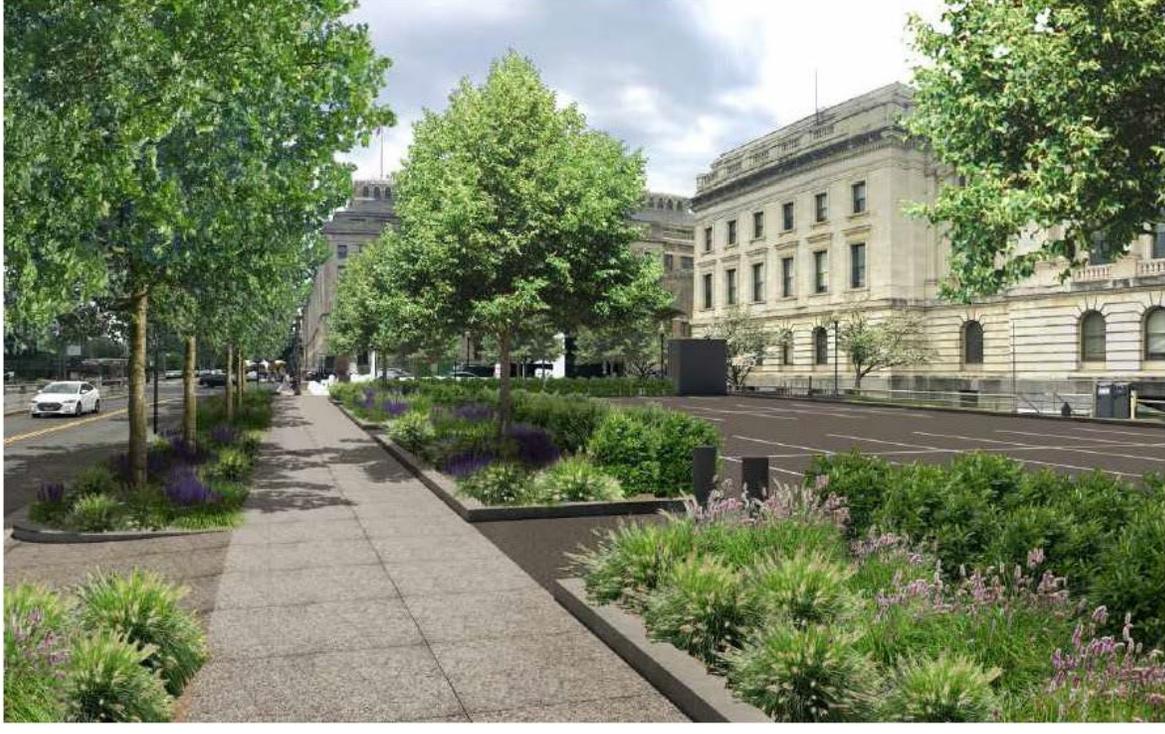
- Supports a shallow foundation
- Post height of 36" is easier to screen with an evergreen shrub
- Lower shrub of 38" preserves pedestrian visibility across the site
- More adaptable to future site changes, easier emergency egress for pedestrians



Existing vs. Proposed Conditions



Existing Condition - Temporary perimeter security



Proposed Concept - Vegetation softens the appearance of security measures

Existing vs. Proposed Conditions

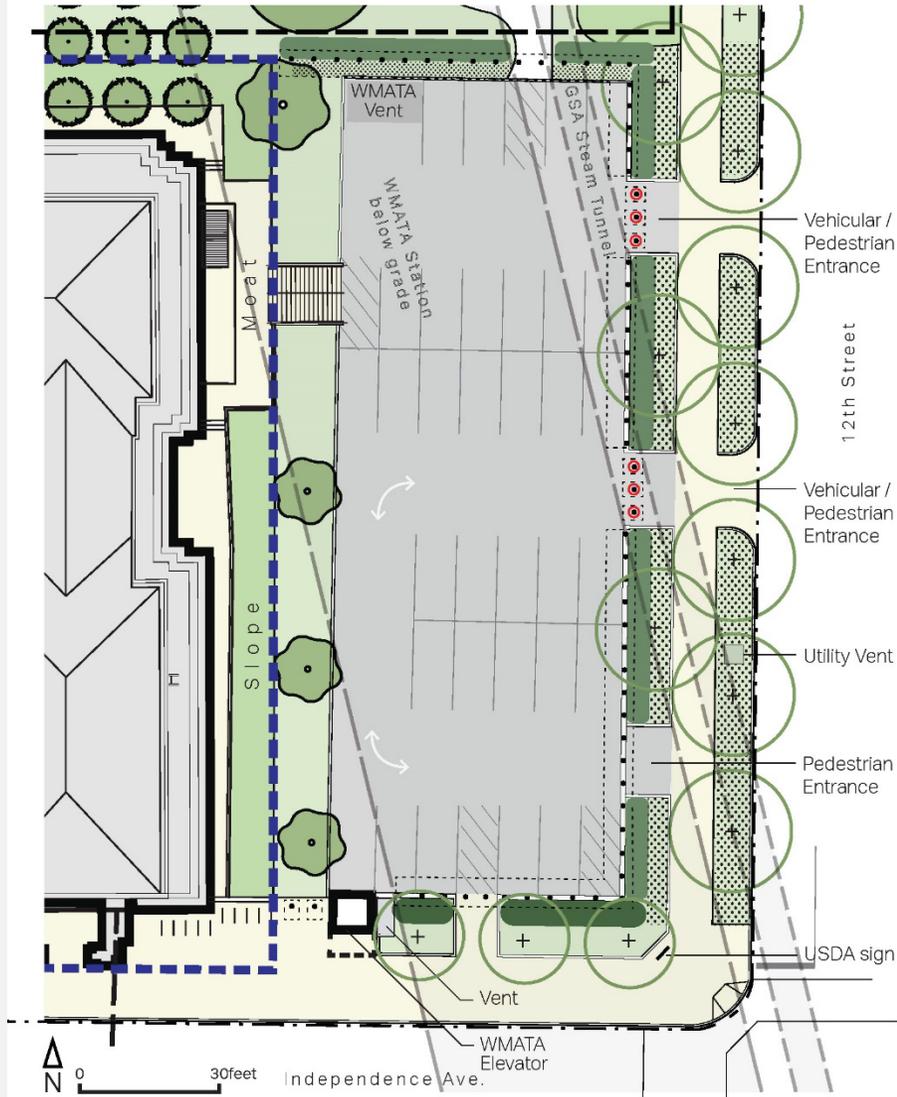


Existing Condition - Temporary perimeter security



Proposed Concept - Vegetation softens the appearance of security measures

Proposed Site Plan



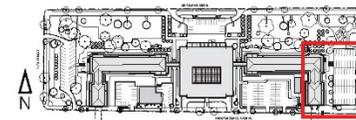
The security measures are intended to be effective, yet also enhance the pedestrian and visitor experience in the project area. The proposed USDA Whitten Building Security Plans include a total of 65 bollards spaced 5'-0" on center (minimum 4'-0" clear between bollards). The proposed plans use two types of bollards, all of which are 10" to 12" in diameter:

- Stationary, sheathed bollards along the north, eastern, and southern perimeters of the parking area will be softened against a backdrop of planted shrubs, including at two pedestrian connections (between the organic garden and the northern edge of the parking area, and between the 12th Street sidewalk and the southern pedestrian entrance). Two stationary bollards would also be placed along the perimeter security line between the Whitten Building's moat and the WMATA elevator.
- Retractable, sheathed bollards will be installed at the north and central entrances connecting 12th Street to the parking area. The operable bollards would likely be activated by employee key cards. The bollards may also be operated by security personnel stationed within the Whitten Building.

The optimal perimeter security system must avoid potential conflicts between the physical barriers and existing subterranean infrastructure. Bollards with wide, shallow foundations were selected for this function because of the limited depth of the WMATA Metrorail station. The proposed plans would carefully and specifically place bollards over portions of the WMATA Metrorail station and the GSA steam tunnel. Preliminary information indicates that the perimeter security measures would not conflict with the steam tunnel.

At this conceptual level of detail, the exact bollard product has not been identified, and therefore the precise depth of the bollards has not been finalized. Similarly, the exact species of trees have not yet been identified; a detailed section will be submitted once the products have been determined. However, the selections would avoid trees whose root systems could create conflicts with existing subterranean infrastructure. USDA is currently in the process of gathering additional information about the depths of the WMATA Metrorail and the GSA steam tunnels, and will continue to consult with both agencies in order to avoid potential conflicts.

- • • Proposed Perimeter Security - (59) 12" diameter bollards with sheathing
- • • Operable Bollards (6)
- ⋯ Bollard Foundation Extents (approximate)
- Future Perimeter Security Line (approved 2014)
- NPS Jurisdiction Line
- Federal Parcel Line
- ▨ Groundcover Planting
- Evergreen Hedge
- ⊕ Canopy Tree



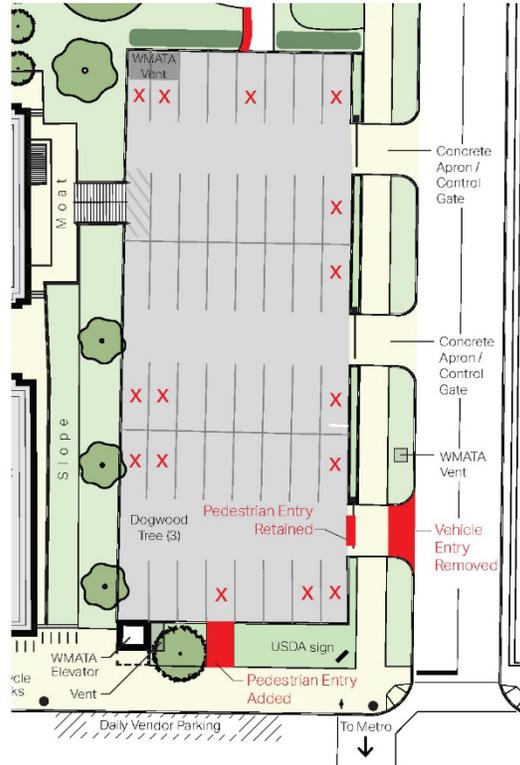
Site Changes - Landscape

As part of the proposed improvements, the project would reduce parking, minimize vehicular access, increase planted area, and expand the tree canopy along the edge of the project area. The entire USDA Headquarters has 6,753 employees for 600 parking spaces; the Whitten Building has 788 assigned employees and 179 parking spaces are available. On Fridays during the spring, summer, and fall, employees must find alternatives to using the parking lot while the farmers market is in operation.

The proposed improvements would reduce the impervious surface area at the site by approximately 1200 square feet. Implementation of this concept would disturb approximately 6770 square feet. The improvements will be consistent with stormwater management requirements of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA), and those of the District Department of Energy and the Environment. The conceptual stormwater management strategy is to collect and treat rainwater that sheet flows to the northeast across the site in several shallow bioretention cells along the east of lot 9. Detailed development of stormwater management strategies, including specific dimensions of bioretention cells will be provided in subsequent submissions of the project.

The site plan, as well as this image, illustrates the extent to which improvements are planned. No canopy trees are proposed along 12th Street beyond what is shown in the landscape proposal. USDA/GSA will coordinate with the District Department of Transportation to ensure that the proposed street trees along 12th Street are consistent with the local streetscape regulations.

Note: in further research it was determined that street trees were established on 12th street prior to Olmsted's 1931 plan. His plan was likely identifying existing street trees. By 1954, the trees along the west side of 12th street had been removed.



Reduction of Parking, Increase Pedestrian Access

- Removal of 15 parking spaces (32% reduction) to allow for increased plantings and improved pedestrian access
- Widened pedestrian entrance at the North of the lot to align with parking space
- Conversion of south vehicular entrance to a pedestrian only access to reduce intersection congestion
- New pedestrian entrance added to the south of the lot, connecting to the Independence Ave. sidewalk
- GSA/USDA will explore designating NW corner of lot for bicycle or motorcycle parking



Increase of Planting Area

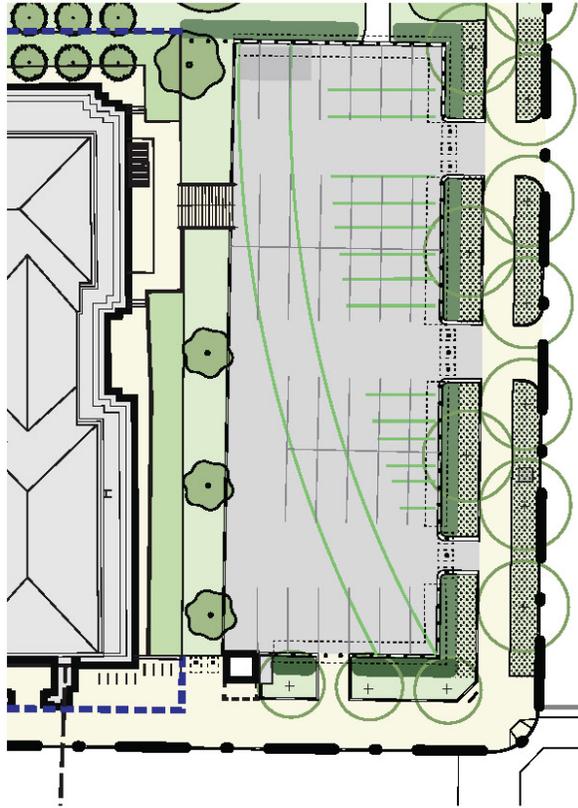
- Conversion of south vehicular curbcut to an extended curbside planting bed
- Expansion of planting beds from 2.5' to 8.5' width along 12th street
- Perennial bioretention and pollinator plantings in perimeter beds including 12th street curbside planting beds
- Integration of security measures along the parking lot side curb of the planting bed, set back from the sidewalk



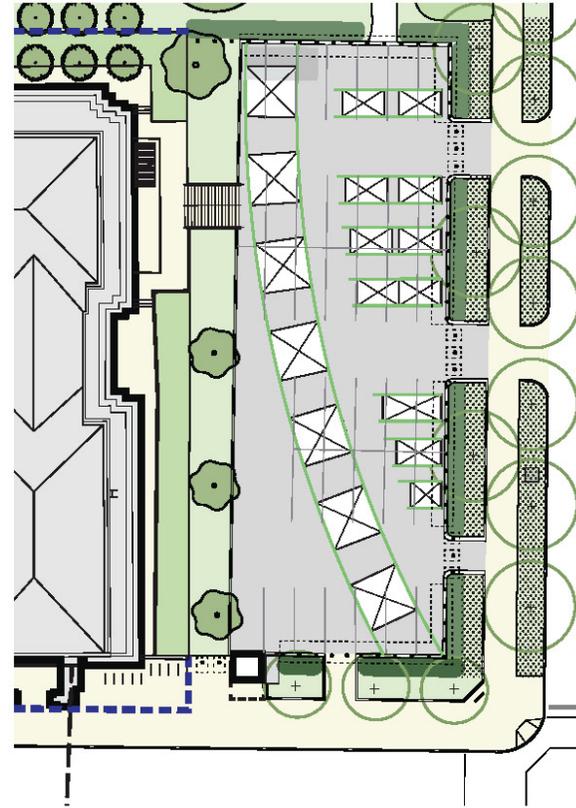
Addition of Tree Canopy

- Restore the tree canopy along 12th Street as documented by Frederick Law Olmsted Landscape Architects in their 1931 USDA planting plan.
- Addition of six canopy trees in new beds along 12th Street and Independence Ave. to create additional morning shade on the farmers market and afternoon shade on the sidewalk

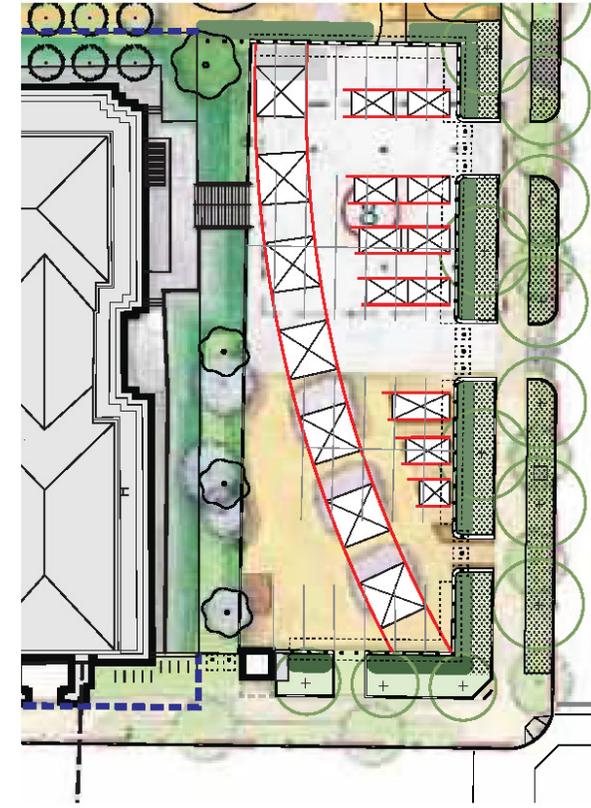
Proposed Plan and Previous Plan Comparison



Farmers Market Tent Guidelines



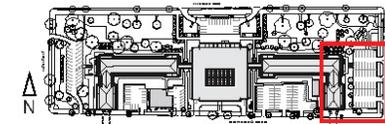
Farmers Market Tent Layout



Tent Layout overlaid 2014 Plan

The Farmers Market is held from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Market set-up is from 4:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Market participants must arrive at the market no later than 8:30 a.m. and may not drive their vehicle in or out of the market parking lot after 8:45 a.m. or before 2:15 p.m. All vehicles must vacate the market site no later than 3:30 p.m. The Farmers Market no longer has evening hours.

The proposed layout of the farmers market could reflect the characteristics of the design laid out in the 2014 Plan. The proposed layout could include markings to configure the market tents at locations similar to the arced placement of tree boxes and planter boxes at the southern portion of the project area. These arcs would then extend to the north throughout the site.

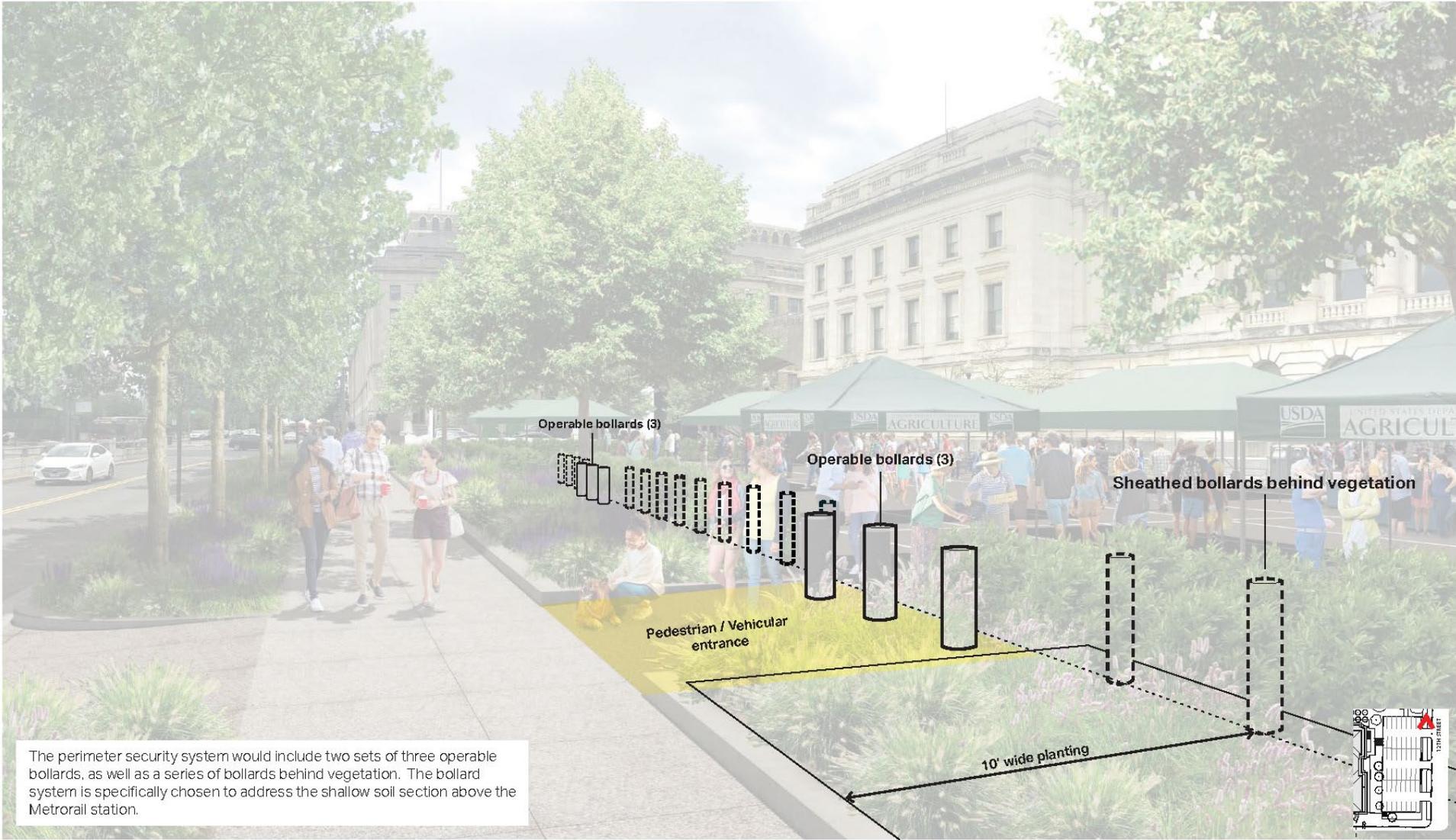


Existing View looking South



The 2014 plan envisioned the elimination of the existing surface parking and impervious areas, in particular on the east and west sides of the building. The long-term goals for stormwater management at the USDA headquarters and Lot 9 have not changed.

Proposed Perimeter Security



The perimeter security system would include two sets of three operable bollards, as well as a series of bollards behind vegetation. The bollard system is specifically chosen to address the shallow soil section above the Metrorail station.

Proposed View looking South



This proposal to improve perimeter security at Lot 9 reduces the impervious surface but still retains some parking. These changes represent Phase 1 between the existing condition and fully addressing a re-envisioned Lot 9.

Existing View looking Northwest



The existing corner of Independence Avenue and 12th Street is dominated by hardscape and mulch beds.

Proposed Perimeter Security



Proposed View looking Northwest



The addition of diverse plantings, including perennial bioretention and perennial plantings and canopy trees will offer significant ecological value while providing an inviting corridor to and from the National Mall.

Existing View looking Northeast



The existing, narrow planters along 12th Street provide minimal ecological value in a hardscape dominated corridor.

Proposed View looking Northeast



The removal of one row of parking significantly expands the existing planter beds from 2.5' to 8.5' wide along 12th Street. This allows for increased groundcover, bioretention and shrub planting while the greater soil volume will support canopy tree

OPERATING STATUS AND PROJECT REVIEW

Due to the Covid-19 public health emergency, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts has made several changes to its meeting schedule and project submission procedures. [Click here](#) for the latest information. For general inquiries, please email cfastaff@cfa.gov or call (202) 504-2200.

CFA 21/NOV/19-c

LOCATION:

12th Street and Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC

OWNER:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. General Services Administration

PROPERTY:

Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building (USDA headquarters), Staff Parking Lot #9

DESCRIPTION:

Site improvements and perimeter security plan

REVIEW TYPE:

Revised concept

PREVIOUS REVIEW:

[CFA 16/MAY/19-5](#)

Recommendation

No objection to the revised concept design for site improvements and the installation of perimeter security barriers for the USDA Public Gathering Area (Staff Parking Lot #9), as shown in materials received and dated 6 November 2019. Refer to DC Historic Preservation Office.