



## Commission Action

April 2, 2026

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<b>PROJECT</b> <b>A New Plan for Pennsylvania Avenue</b> Pennsylvania Avenue between 3rd and 15th Streets, NW Washington, DC	<b>NCPC FILE NUMBER</b> 7509
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b> National Capital Planning Commission	<b>NCPC MAP FILE NUMBER</b> 1.23(00.00)46183
<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b> 40 U.S.C. § 8711(e)(2); Memorandum of Agreement, § V, 61 Fed. Reg.41789, 41791 (August 12, 1996); and the General Agreement re: the Pennsylvania Avenue Initiative § III.B (July 13, 2023)	<b>APPLICANT'S REQUEST</b> Approval of comments on design concepts for the New Plan for Pennsylvania Avenue
	<b>ACTION TAKEN</b> Approved comments on design concepts for the New Plan for Pennsylvania Avenue

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The Commission:

**Approves** the following comments on the design concepts for the New Plan for Pennsylvania Avenue.

**Notes** Pennsylvania Avenue's important historic and symbolic significance and ceremonial role.

**Notes** the need for revitalization due to changing economic and physical conditions that have significantly impacted the Avenue's function, character, and economic health. The 1974 Plan no longer addresses current needs.

**Notes** that agencies delegated with jurisdictional authorities and responsibilities after dissolution of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation are represented in the project partnership.

**Supports** the NCPC, General Services Administration, National Park Service, District of Columbia, DowntownDC BID, and Events DC (Project Partners) effort to update the 1974 Plan.

**Supports** the vision of the Avenue as a beautiful, everyday destination that will address existing deficiencies of the public spaces, infrastructure, and security; and the vision of the Avenue as a venue for national and local events to help relieve pressure to overuse the National Mall and elevate the capital city's profile on the national and international stage.

**Finds** the project goals and design aspirations of creating a safe, green, and beautiful destination for Washington, DC's visitors and residents will advance Executive Order 14252: *Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful*.

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**Notes** that the redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue provides an opportunity to update its antiquated infrastructure and outdated design, and plan for a critical comprehensive infrastructure upgrade to beautify the streetscape, improve utility services for the area, improve safety and efficiencies in event operations, and maintenance.

**Notes** a new Plan will relieve pressure to overuse the National Mall, providing a signature public space for the capital city, and establishing a venue for local, regional and national events.

**Notes** the redesign of the Avenue will contribute to improving property values and downtown's economic vitality and quality of life, creating a vibrant destination attractive to the next generation of visitors, federal workers, and residents.

**Notes** this concept review submission includes design concept alternatives for the Corridor and three main public space areas at the Avenue's Western End, Market Square, and Eastern End.

**Notes** these alternatives must support a range of special events and daily programming, protect the historic resource, enhance the Avenue's symbolic and ceremonial role, contribute to downtown's vibrancy and economic health, complement and enhance the value of adjacent uses, and mitigate overprogramming of the National Mall.

### *CORRIDOR*

**Notes** the design concepts include two alternatives with the same roadway configuration. Each utilize trees to establish symmetry and formally frame the Capitol view but differ in character and explores the incorporation of symbolic and functional poles.

**Finds** that the reconfigured roadway in the *Corridor Base Alternative* efficiently accommodates multiple modes of transportation and curbside functions, improves the pedestrian experience, increases opportunities to view the U.S. Capitol, and supports current and future event needs, including the Inaugural Parade.

**Finds** that canopy trees offer ample shade while the columnar allée offers a distinctive character that would be unique to the Avenue.

**Finds** that the *Corridor Pole Alternative* adds symbolic and functional poles to differentiate, frame, and add structure to the Capitol viewshed and potentially consolidate and integrate lighting and other event support infrastructure.

**Support** the design concepts to configure the avenue's roadway.

**Recommends** future study to understand if and how utilities could be integrated into the symbolic and ceremonial poles, including the required structural foundation and approaches to locating infrastructure without impacting the historic and symbolic corridor, distracting from the visual quality of the viewshed and cluttering of the street.

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*WESTERN END*

**Notes** the design concepts include two alternatives for the alignment of Pennsylvania Avenue at the western end of the project area, including the Historic Diagonal Cartway Alternative and Central Plaza Alternative.

**Notes** both design alternatives will reconfigure the public spaces to bring the plaza to grade, celebrate the Capitol viewshed, support the inaugural parade, increase flexible use for special events, maintain multimodal travel lanes, maintain access to surrounding buildings, and introduce shade and pedestrian amenities.

**Finds** the *Historical Diagonal Cartway Alternative* roadway bisects Freedom Plaza to reestablish the Avenue's historic alignment, forming two at-grade triangular plazas, while maintaining access to the buildings to the north and south of the Avenue.

**Finds** that the *Central Plaza Alternative* generally retains the Avenue's existing vehicular circulation around Freedom Plaza and Pershing Park and creates a large central at-grade plaza.

**Recommends** further study to evaluate, develop and refine the functional and operational requirements of the vehicular circulation, public spaces, and access and relationship to adjacent buildings for both alternatives.

*MARKET SQUARE and EASTERN END*

**Notes** the Market Square design concepts emphasize this central location as an important crossroad on the Avenue by connecting Market Square, and National Memorial, National Achieves and the Indiana Avenue axis as the heart of Pennsylvania Avenue.

**Finds** that the Market Square design concepts will support existing and future residents and commercial activity, celebrate the connection to downtown along 7th Street NW, increase programming opportunities for daily, weekly, monthly small-scale events or installations, and honor the history of this location.

**Notes** the Eastern End design concepts improve access and flexible use of the park for respite and a variety of gathering spaces to support events.

**Finds** that the Eastern End design concepts support the use of the park as a large flexible event space, preserve and celebrate the 4th Street viewshed, reduce or eliminate stairs and visual barriers, support Courthouse and Embassy security needs, modernize utilities, and integrate event support infrastructure.

**Recommends** further study to evaluate and develop the use, functional and operational requirements of the public spaces and their relationships to adjacent uses, the public space system, and the threshold between downtown and the National Mall.

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*GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS*

**Comments** favorably on the overall design approach and **supports** staff coordination with partner agencies and other stakeholders to further development of alternatives to understand the impact on function, character, views, and experience.

**Notes** that the Plan update will include schematic designs and planning and design guidelines to inform final design, phasing, implementation, and decision making as future funding is available.

**Notes** that the Implementation Program is being developed concurrently, and the findings will be integrated into the final Plan. More information on future phases of work, including final design and implementation, will be included in subsequent reviews.



4/3/2026

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Meghan Hottel-Cox

Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

