

New Monumental Arch

Memorial Avenue, Washington, DC

Approval of Final Site and Building Plans

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Final and Final Site and Building Plans

Session: Staff Presentation

NCPC Review Officer: Jamie Herr

NCPC File Number: 8778

Project Summary:

The U.S. Department of the Interior has submitted final site and building plans for a new Monumental Arch in Memorial Circle in Washington, D.C. for Commission approval. The Commission approved the preliminary site and buildings plans at the July 9, 2026 meeting and provided comments on the concept plans at the June 4, 2026 meeting. The applicant has addressed or is in the process of addressing all of the Commission's recommendations from the preliminary review. Per the applicant, the project includes construction of the Triumphal Arch, associated plaza and landscape improvements, supporting utility and stormwater infrastructure, traffic and pedestrian circulation modifications, security features, lighting, and temporary staging and laydown areas required for construction. The proposed arch would be an approximately 250-foot-tall reinforced concrete structure clad in stone and ornamented by a central figure and two eagles, positioned above each arch leg. The arch would be 166 feet wide with a 55-foot-wide opening, providing views from the observation deck to area landmarks. The arch would be built from concrete and finished with granite. The applicant updated the transportation plans and lighting plans as necessary. No other plan elements have changed.

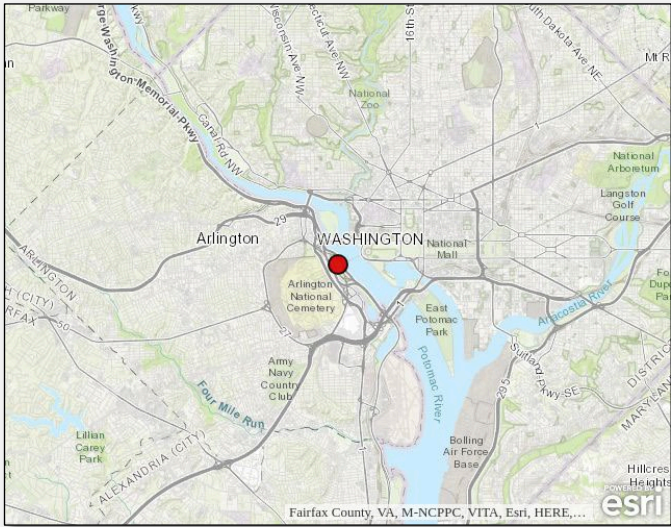
The interior of the arch has not changed since the preliminary review and includes six stairways and five elevators. Two pairs of elevators in the north and south legs would serve the lower public levels, and a fifth elevator would serve the observation deck. Two large circular spiral stairs would connect the ground level to the gallery level; two elliptical spiral stairs would connect the gallery level to the observation deck; and two egress stairs would connect all occupiable levels to dedicated exit-only doors at grade.

Project Summary

The Commission requested the following additional information:

- A justification for the project's height when the project returns to NCPC for final approval.
Provided
- Updated information regarding the potential off-site impacts to the vehicular transportation network in response to comments from the District Department of Transportation and Arlington County, Virginia.
Provided
- Continued work with the Federal Highway Administration, District Department of Transportation, Arlington County, and other agencies as appropriate, regarding the proposed changes and impacts to the surface transportation network.
Ongoing
- Details regarding pick-up, drop-off, and loading locations, and coordinate with Arlington National Cemetery prior to final review regarding the use of the Memorial Avenue and the cemetery parking garage for arch visitor parking.
Provided
- Any navigational or safety lighting as required by the Federal Aviation Administration.
Provided
- Continued consultation as necessary with the federal agencies and the Section 106 consulting parties, to continue to explore ways to minimize impacts to historic resources, and to determine appropriate mitigation to resolve adverse effects, to be included in a Programmatic Agreement.
Provided
- Information about the final granite cladding selection.
Provided
- A narrative describing the proposed lighting concept and its relationship to the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery that includes relevant details on the proposed lighting stanchions and any other site lighting, including illumination levels proposed (foot lambers, or other measure) to understand the relative brightness of the monument as compared to other national monuments and memorials, and to protect the lighting hierarchy of the National Mall.
Provided

Site Location

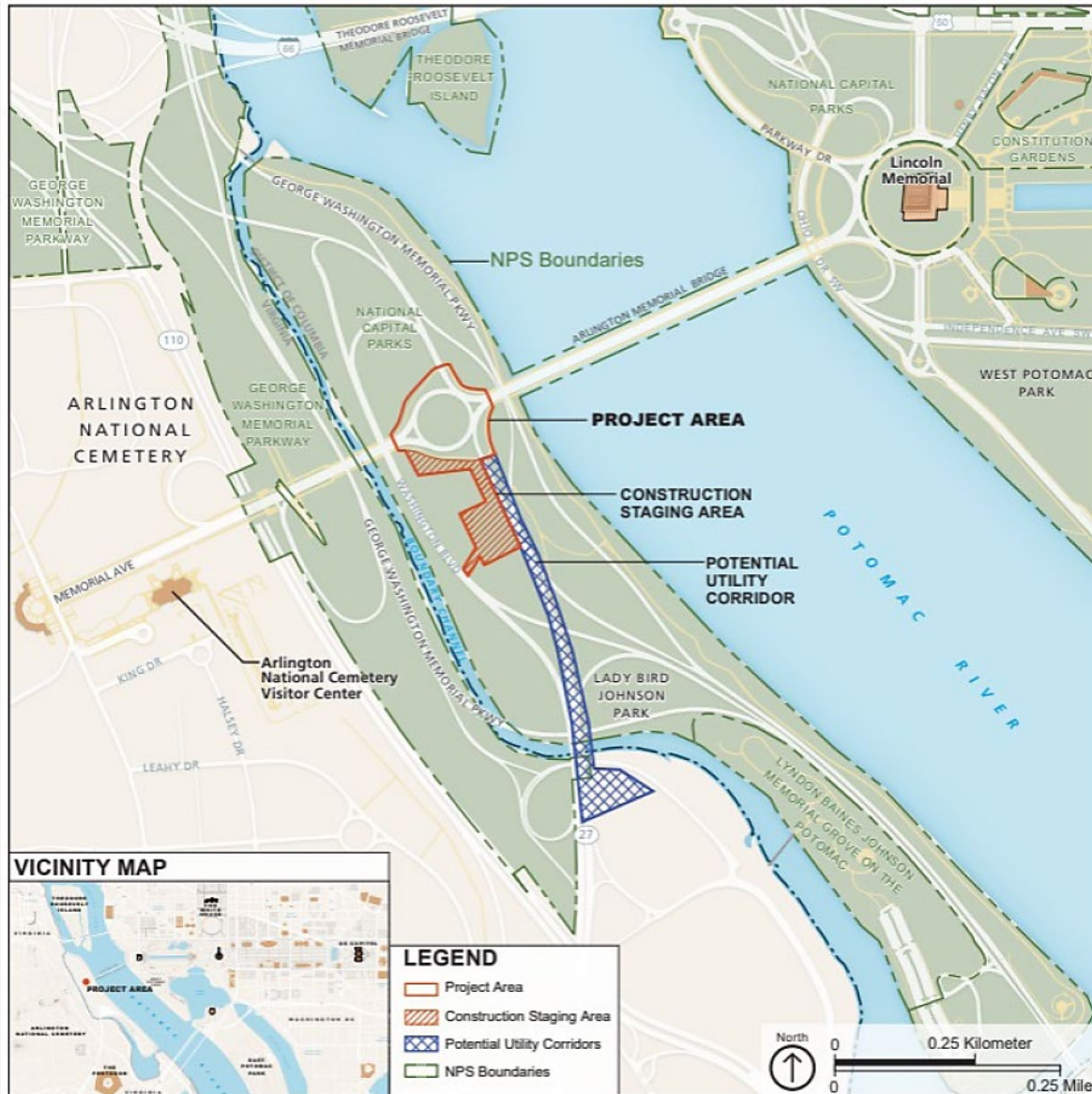


Location Map

Project Location



Description of Project Area

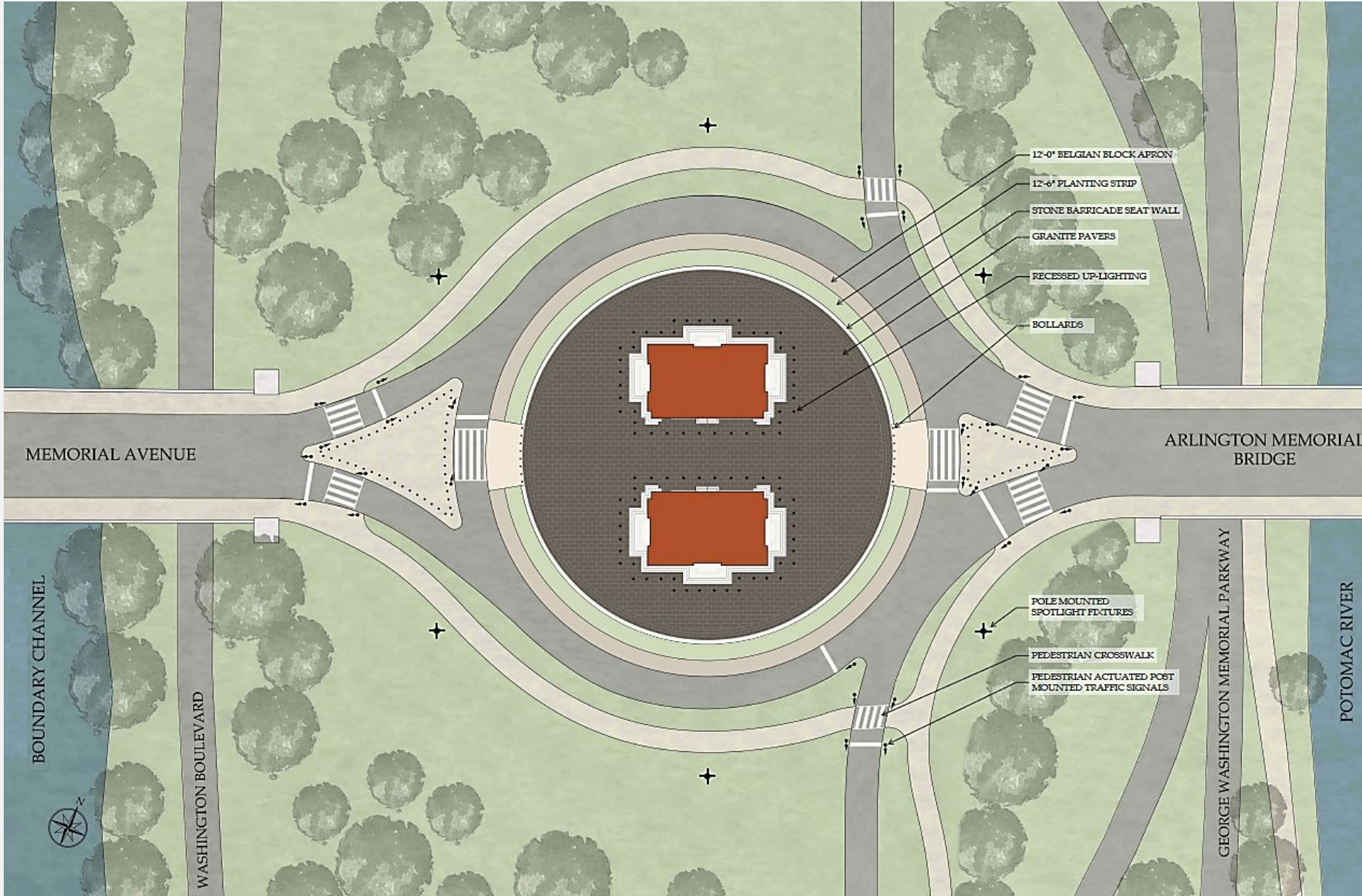


The project site is Memorial Circle, which is at the intersection of Memorial Bridge, Memorial Avenue and Washington Boulevard in Washington, DC.

The proposed construction and materials staging area is south of the project site.

Arlington National Cemetery is west of the project site and the Lincoln Memorial is east of the project site, across the Potomac River.

Final Site Plan



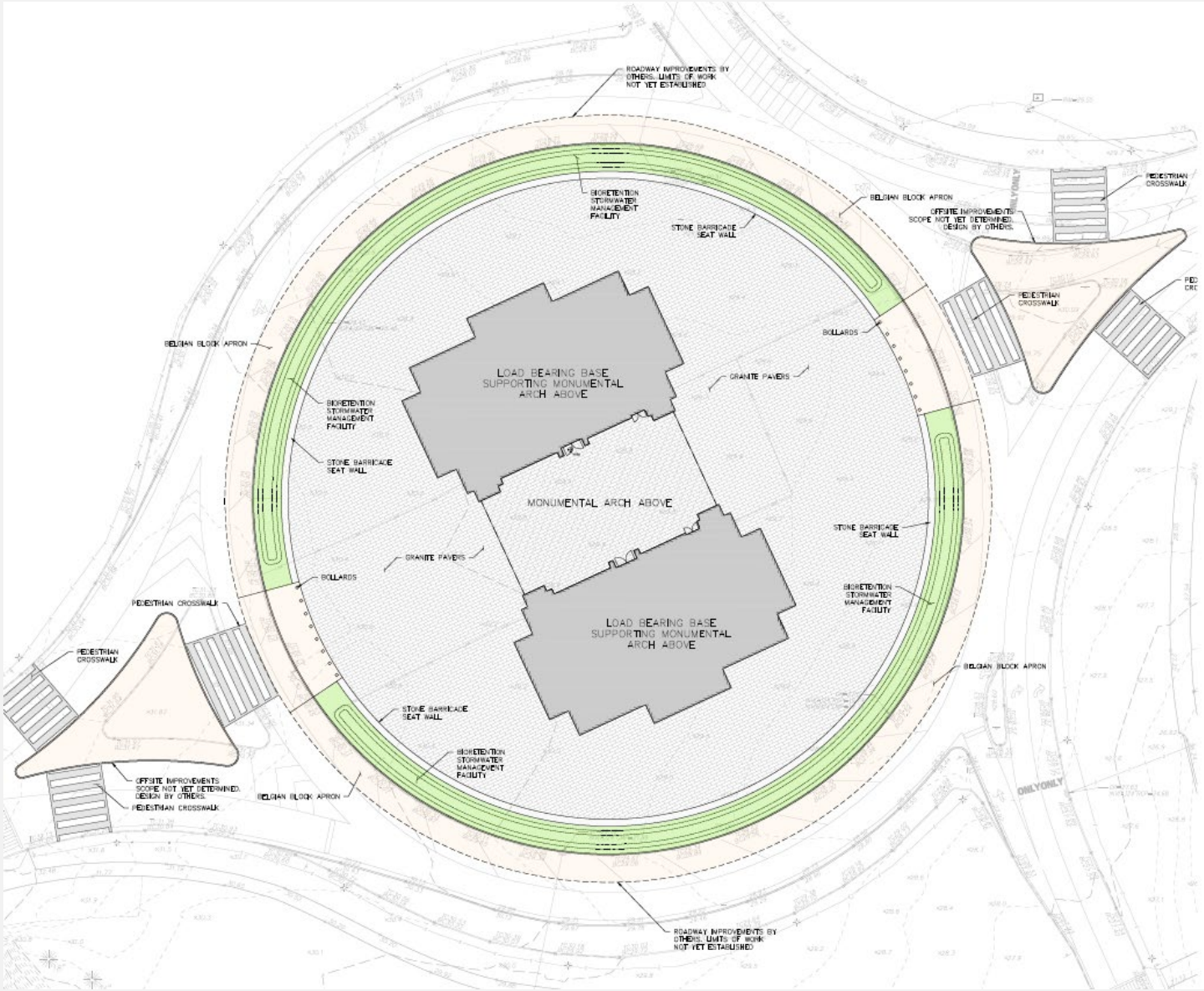
Proposed Elements:

- Belgian Block Apron
- Planting Strip
- Stone Seat Wall
- Granite pavers
- Bollards
- Pole Mounted
Spotlights
- Pedestrian
Crosswalk
- Traffic Signals

Final Updates:

- 15 Traffic Signals removed, 2 minimum maintained at each pedestrian crossing
- Recessed up-lighting removed

Final Design



LEGEND:

LOAD BEARING BASE SUPPORTING MONUMENTAL ARCH ABOVE



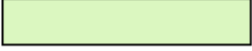
ARCH OVERHEAD



GRANITE PAVERS



LANDSCAPE



Final Architectural and Design Program



Design

Final Monumental Arch Rendering



Final Monumental Arch Rendering



Updated Traffic Access Analysis



The study area was expanded to the south and west to evaluate potential impacts to the broader transportation network resulting from concerns that projected vehicle queues extended beyond the original study limits. Previous iterations of the traffic analysis only included AMC. This analysis was expanded to 4 additional approaches in the larger transportation network. The study includes the following areas and intersections:

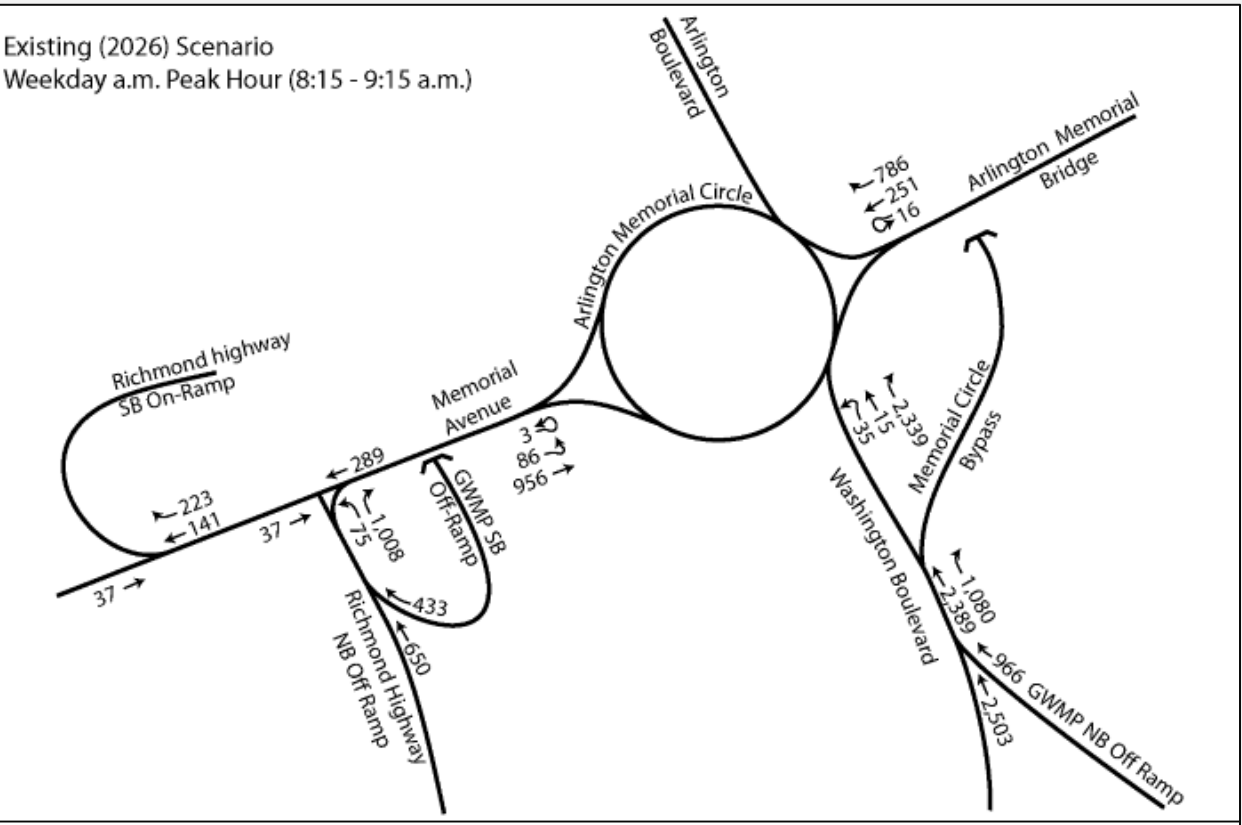
1. AMC, including all surrounding approaches
2. Washington Boulevard at GWMP Ramps
3. Memorial Avenue at Richmond Highway/GWMP Off-Ramp
4. Memorial Avenue at Richmond Highway SB On-Ramp
5. Richmond Highway NB Off-Ramp at GWMP SB Off-Ramp

Existing Traffic Counts

Weekday Morning Peak Hour Traffic Counts

Existing 2026

Existing (2026) Scenario
Weekday a.m. Peak Hour (8:15 - 9:15 a.m.)

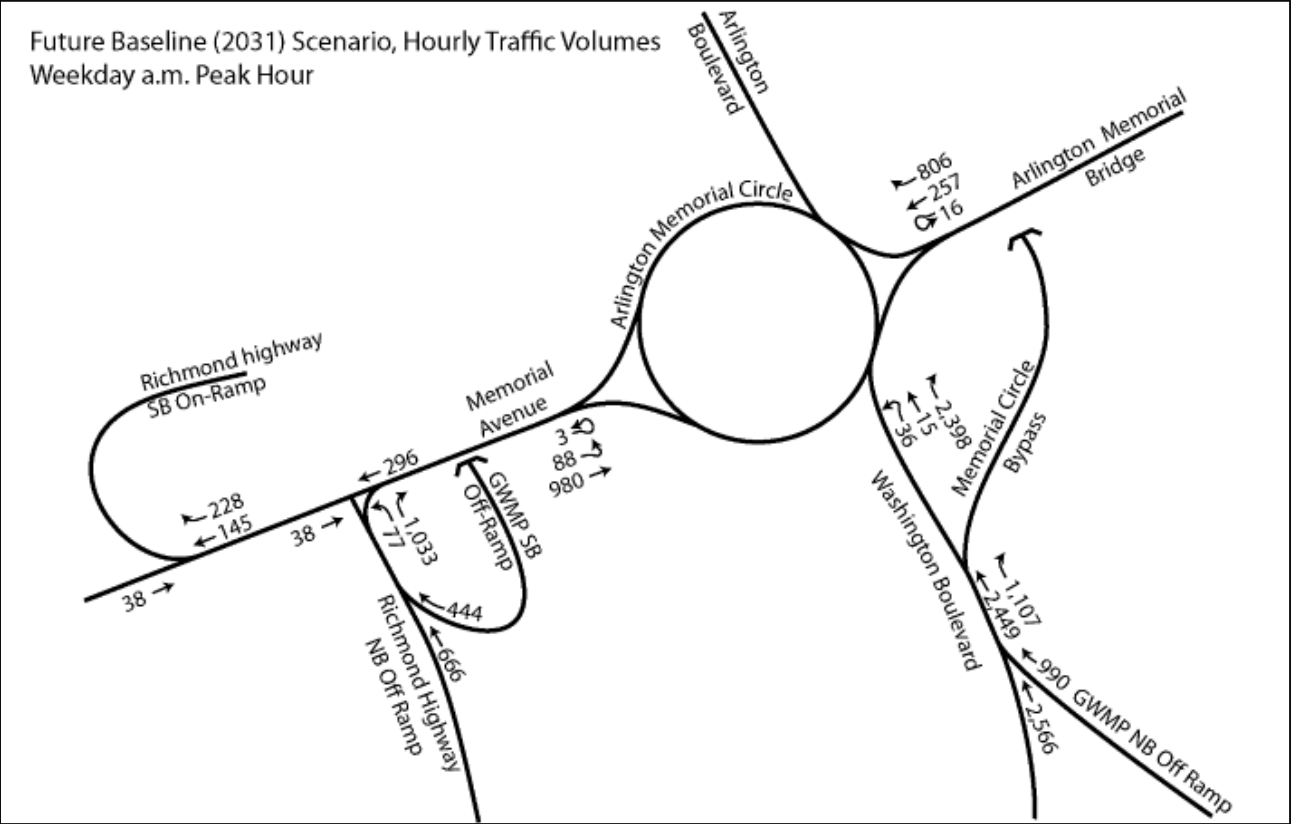


Throughout AMC, the highest traffic volumes occur at the Washington Boulevard northbound right turn movement and the Memorial Avenue eastbound through movement. Traffic from Washington Boulevard and from Memorial Avenue combine into traffic traveling over the AMB towards Washington D.C. The highest volume occurs during the morning commuting period with a shorter and a higher peak exceeding 3,000 vehicles per hour.

Future Baseline Traffic Counts

Weekday Morning Peak Hour Traffic Counts

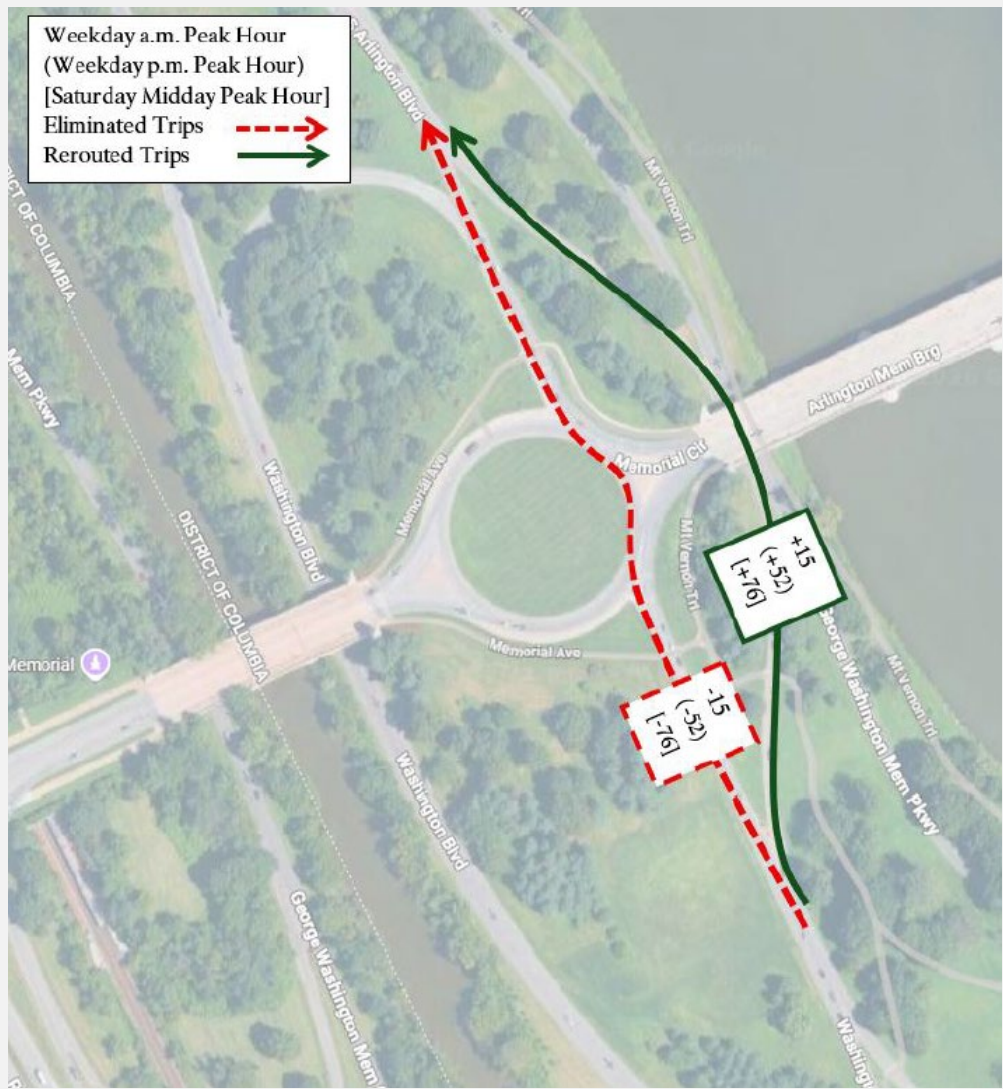
No Change 2031



Consistent with standard traffic study methodology, existing traffic volumes were projected to future-year conditions to evaluate and compare anticipated traffic operations without the proposed project (Future Baseline) and with the proposed improvements in place (Future Build). By comparing these two scenarios the traffic model can present a better measure of the impact of the project after it is fully operational. The future year for this project was established as five years, consistent with a typical short-term future traffic forecasting period.

Future traffic volumes were projected using a growth rate of 0.5% per year over five years. This growth rate is consistent with the forecasting of other regional transportation models and is supported by travel demand projections developed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG).

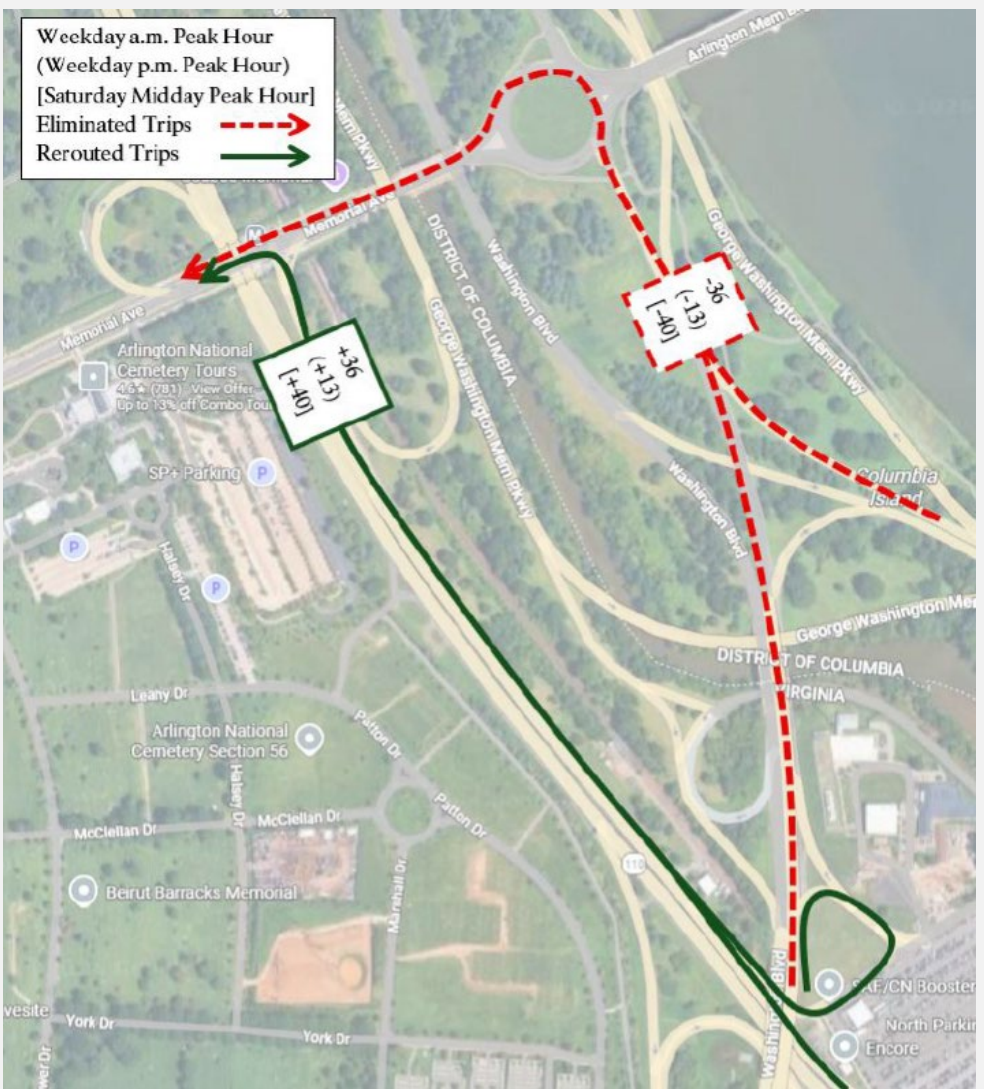
Proposed Traffic Circulation Changes



Project eliminates:

- 1. Washington Boulevard northbound through movements
- 2. Washington Boulevard northbound to westbound Memorial Avenue

Traffic will be rerouted

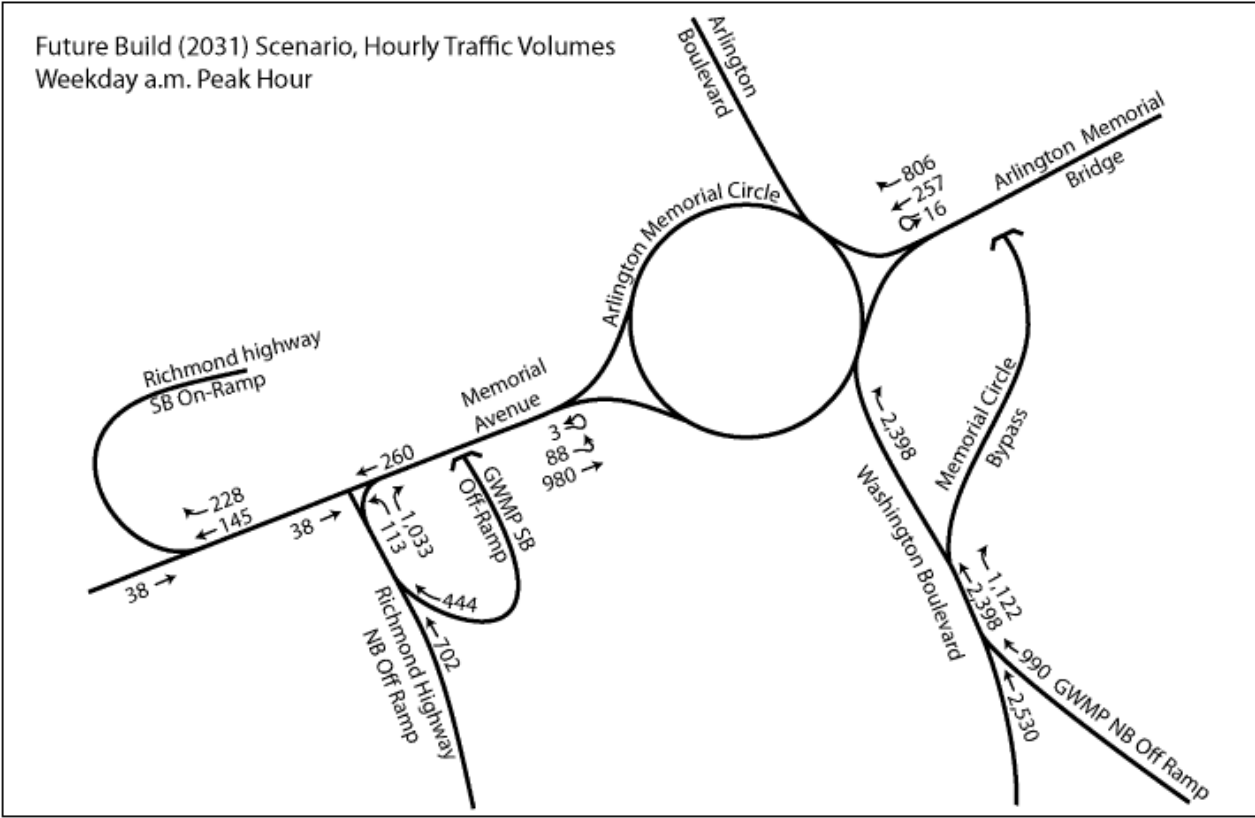


Future Traffic Counts

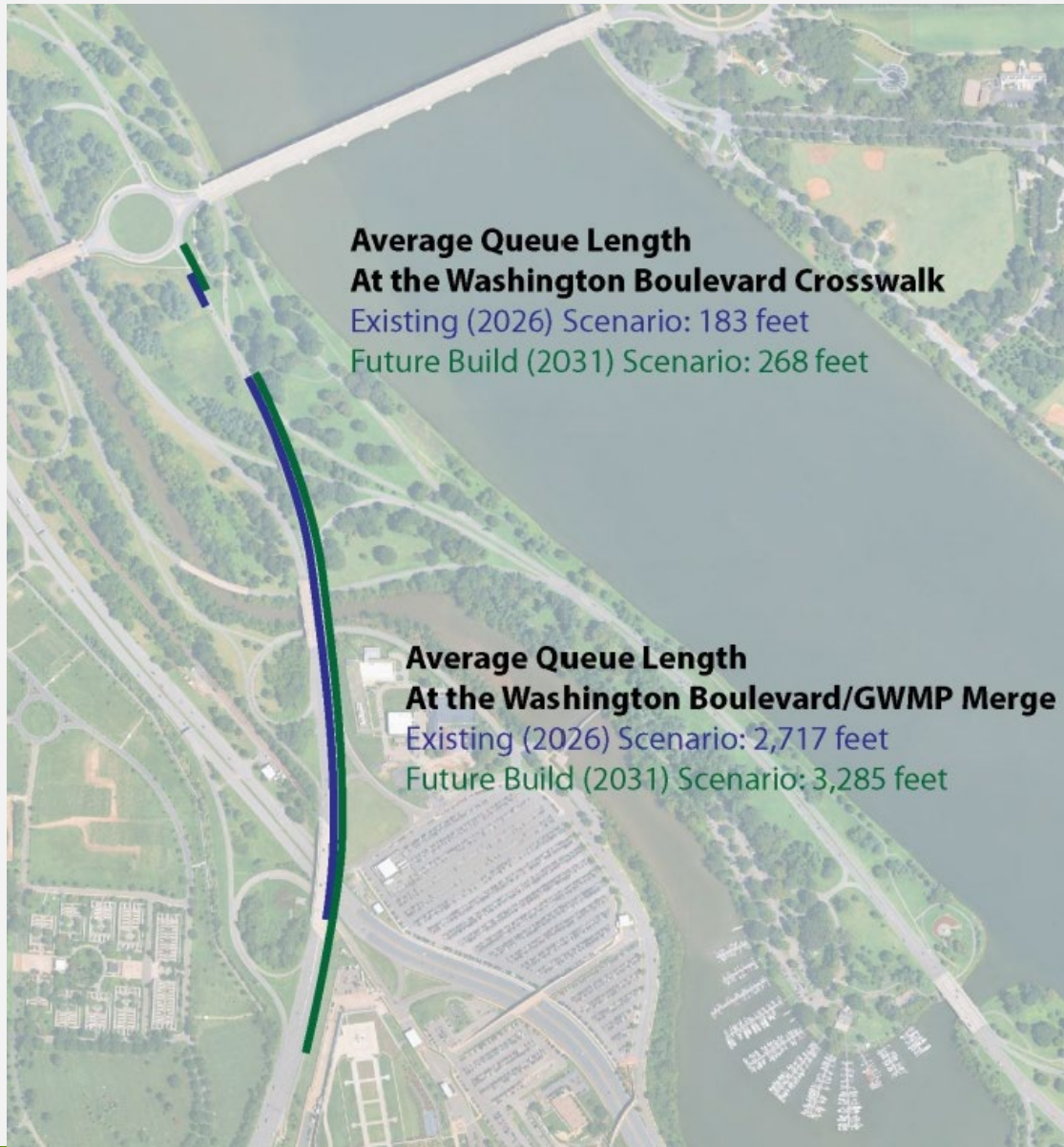
Weekday Morning Peak Hour Traffic Counts

The proposed signalized concept eliminates one approach lane serving two movements through AMC, the Washington Boulevard northbound through movement to Arlington Boulevard and the Washington Boulevard northbound left-turn movement to Memorial Avenue. The traffic volumes can detour to alternative routes as shown. The figure also shows the traffic volume expected to detour during the weekday a.m. peak hours and have been incorporated in the traffic volumes and traffic modeling analysis.

Future with Proposed Arch 2031

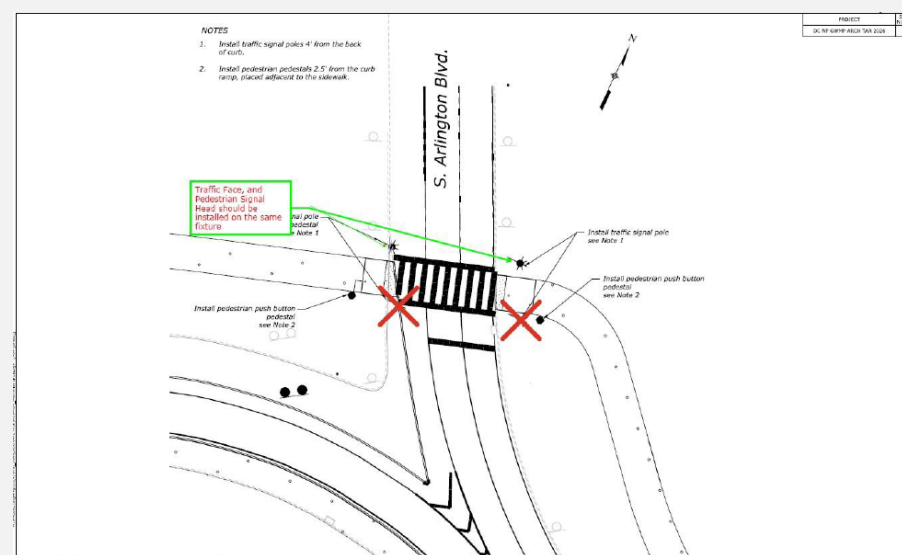
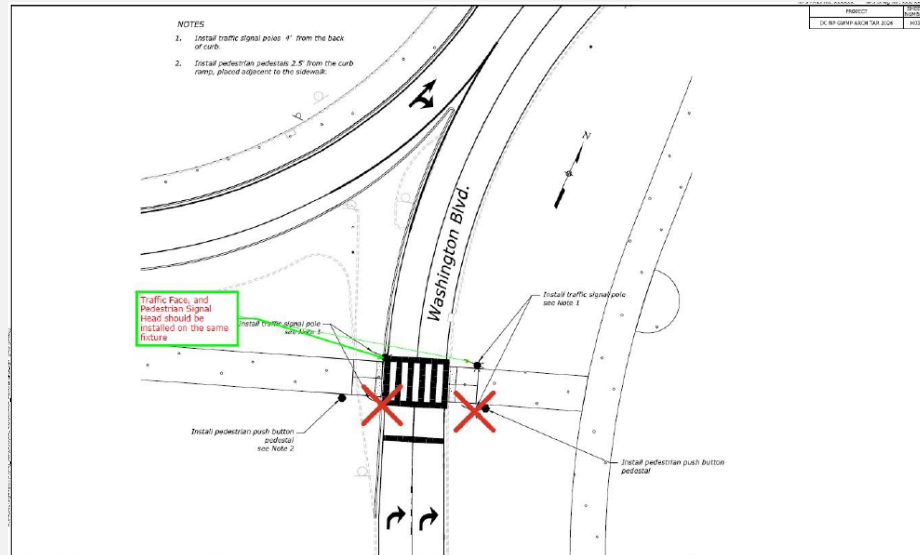
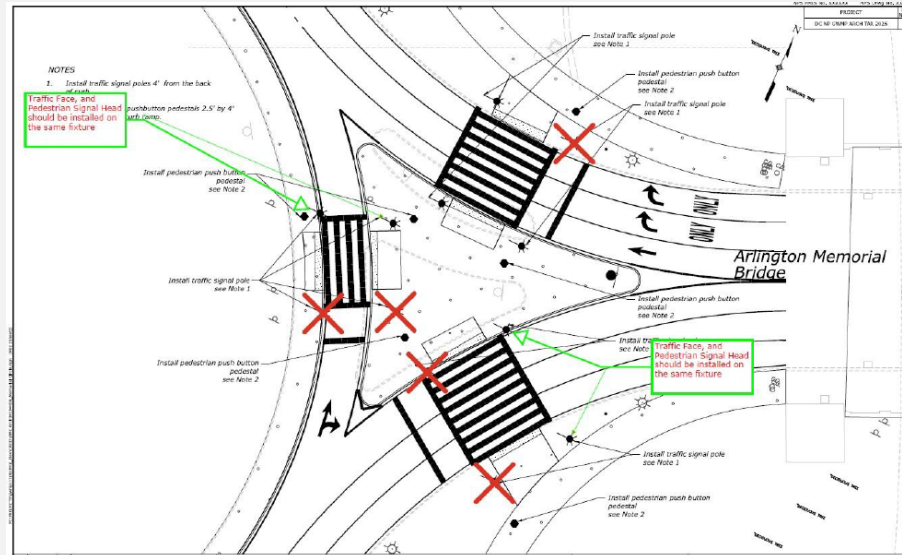
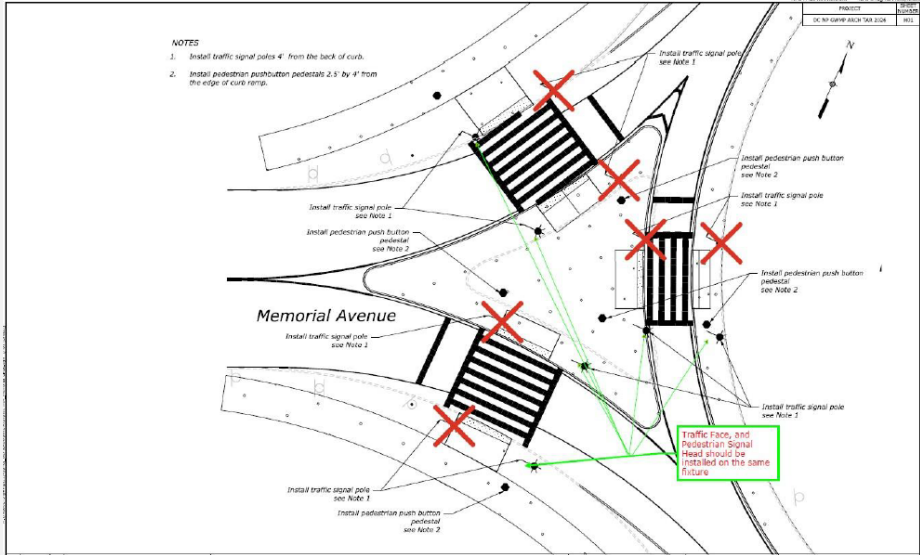


Future Queue Length - Washington Boulevard



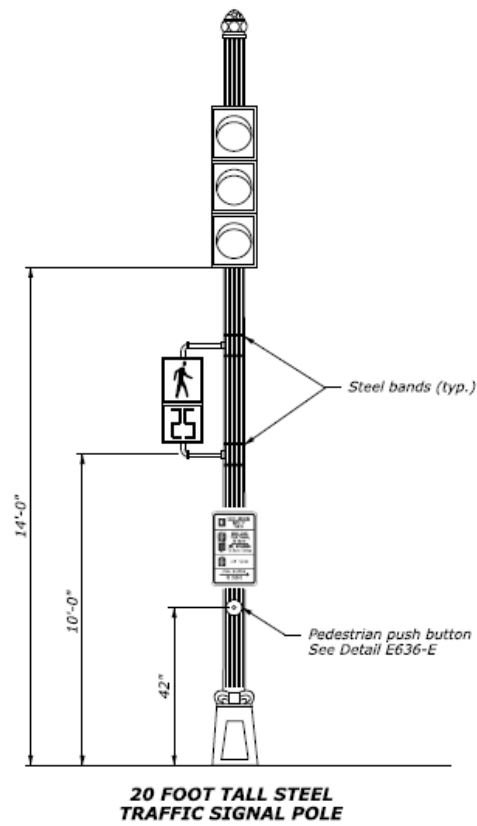
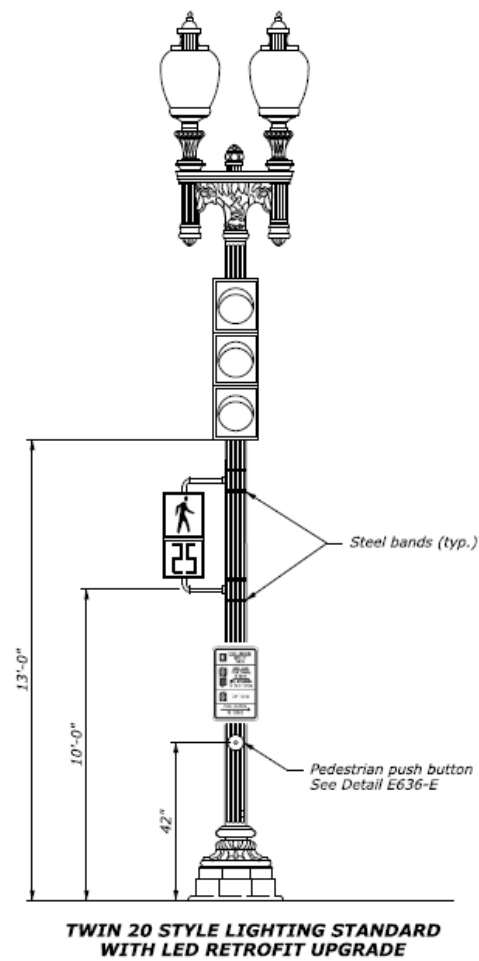
The traffic operations analysis demonstrates that during the weekday morning commuter peak period congestion originates along Washington Boulevard at the merge point with the GWMP ramp, south of AMC. The weave condition leads to an average queue length of about 2,700 feet today and is expected to maintain a length of about 3,000 feet in the future. This average queue length does not extend to the interchange with I-395, which is approximately 7,000 feet south of AMC.

Traffic Signal Updates

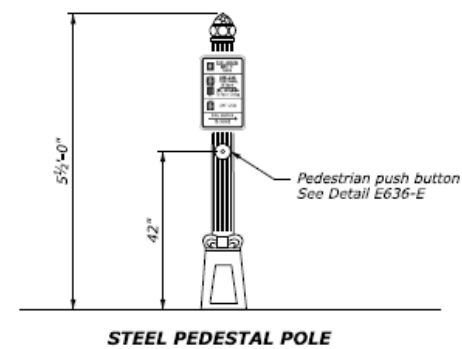


To reduce visual clutter within the landscape and provide a more representative estimate of the infrastructure required, an analysis was conducted to evaluate potential sight-distance and visibility constraints for each signal face. Based on this analysis, 15 traffic signal posts were eliminated from the preliminary design. Each signalized crosswalk will retain a minimum of two traffic signal posts and the necessary three-section vehicular signal indications, pedestrian signal indications, and accessible pedestrian push buttons.

Final Transportation Details



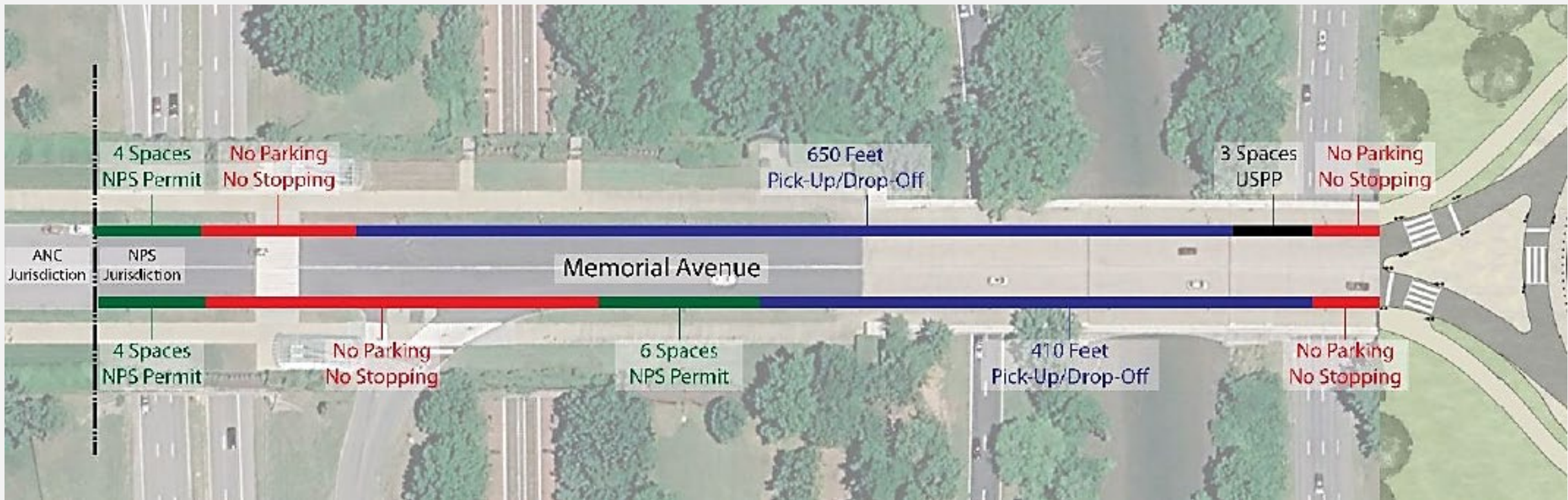
- NOTES:
1. Mount all new steel traffic signal poles on a transformer. See Detail E636-D for transformer base details.
 2. Use stainless steel strapping to affix hardware to poles, unless otherwise specified.



Traffic Signal Hardware Arrangement on Metal Poles

Final Curb Use Management Plan

Per the submission, memorial Avenue is approximately 60 feet wide, providing sufficient roadway width to accommodate curbside activities while maintaining two-way vehicular operations. Dedicated curbside space will support passenger pick-up and drop-off, staff parking, bus loading and unloading, and other delivery and service activities. Existing parking at ANC provides capacity for personal vehicles, while motorcoach parking and staging will continue to be accommodated primarily at ANC, with Memorial Avenue available to support overflow operations as needed. Coordination with ANC regarding parking, curbside operations, and site access will continue as the project advances.

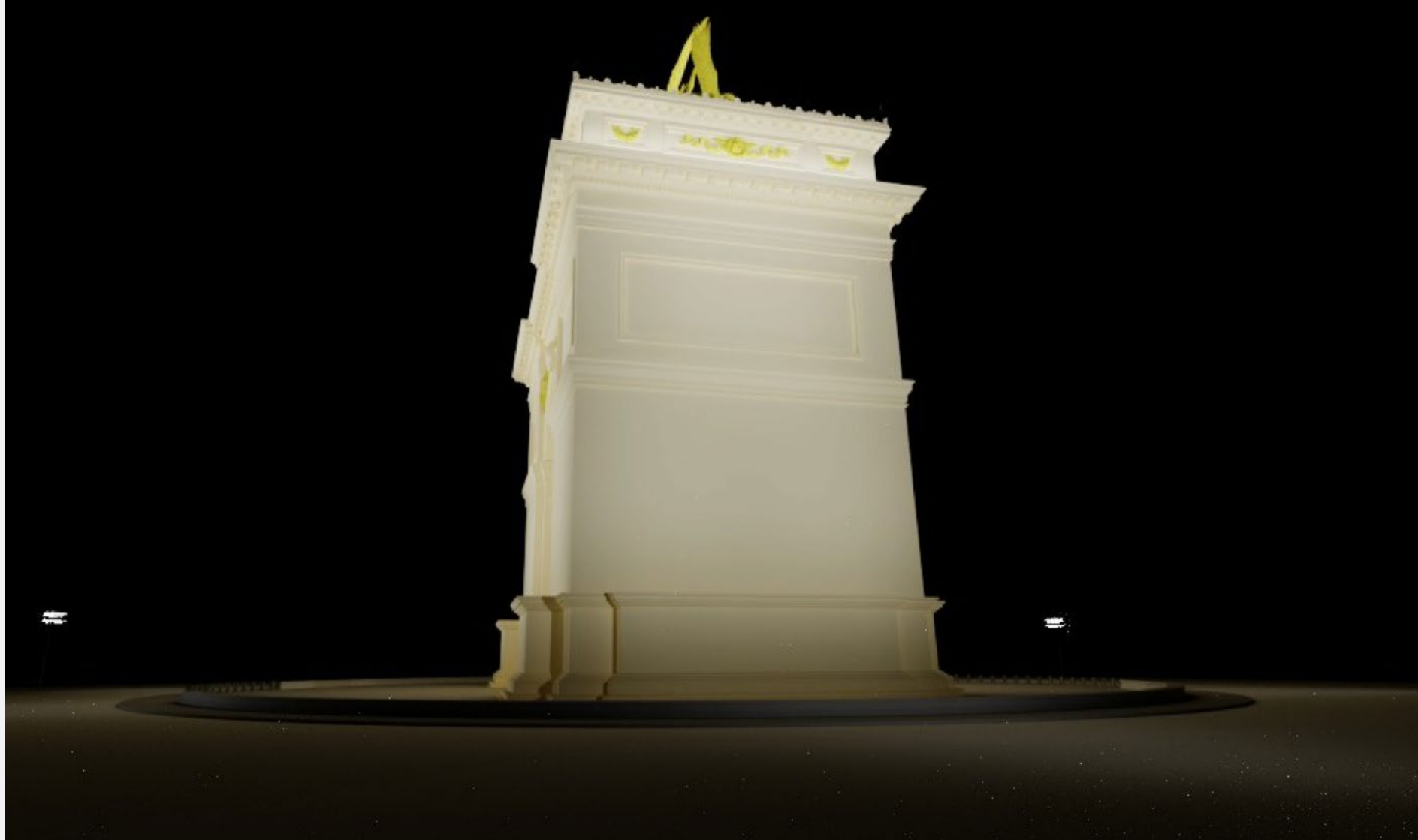


Final Lighting Rendering



According to the applicant, the proposed lighting design for the arch is intended to create a timeless nighttime presence that highlights the monument's architectural significance while maintaining visual comfort for motorists, visitors, and the surrounding environment. The design focuses on emphasizing the arch's defining architectural features, enhancing depth and dimension, and delivering a balanced, uniform visual appearance from all viewing angles.

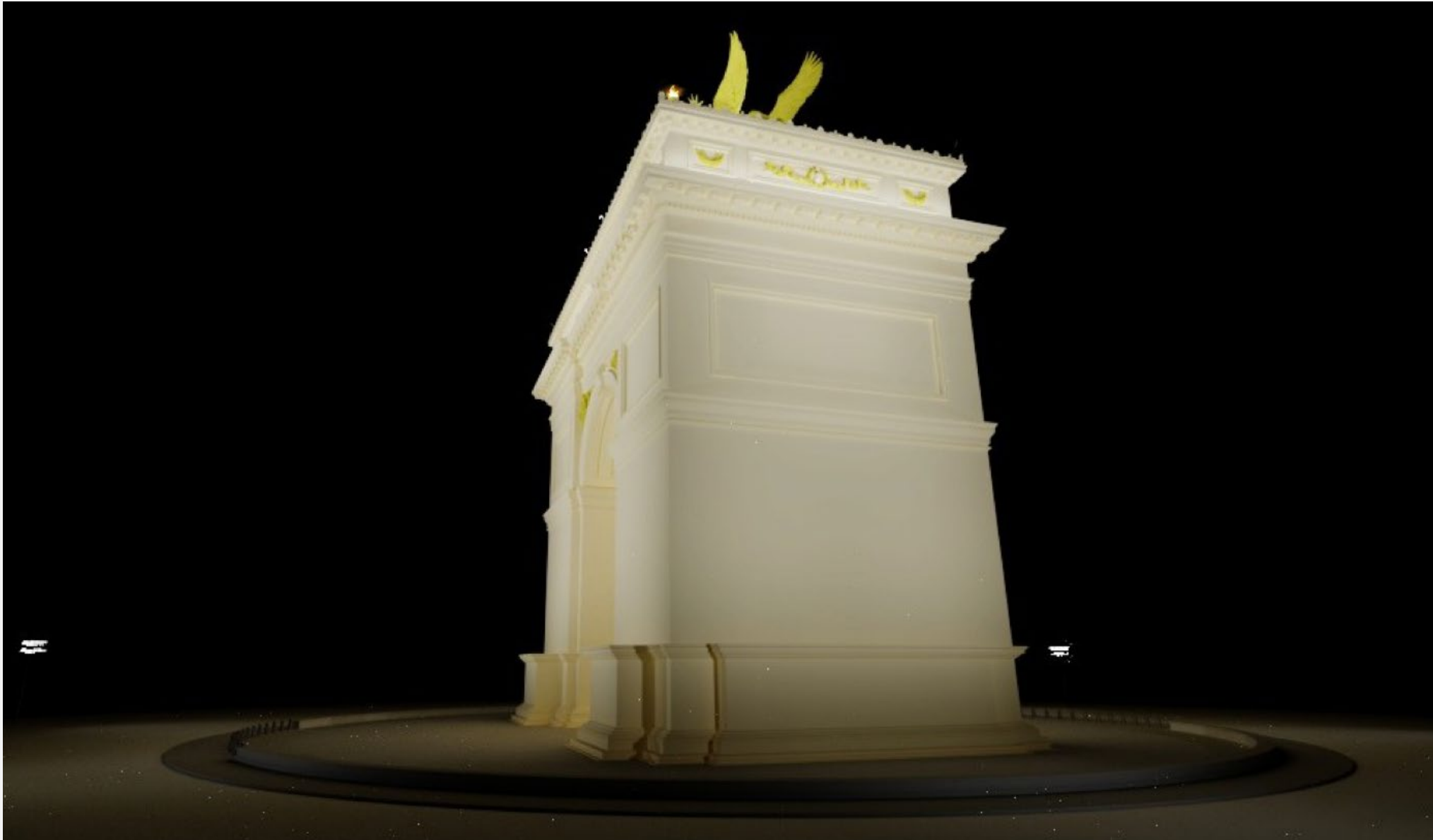
Final Lighting Rendering



Final Lighting Rendering



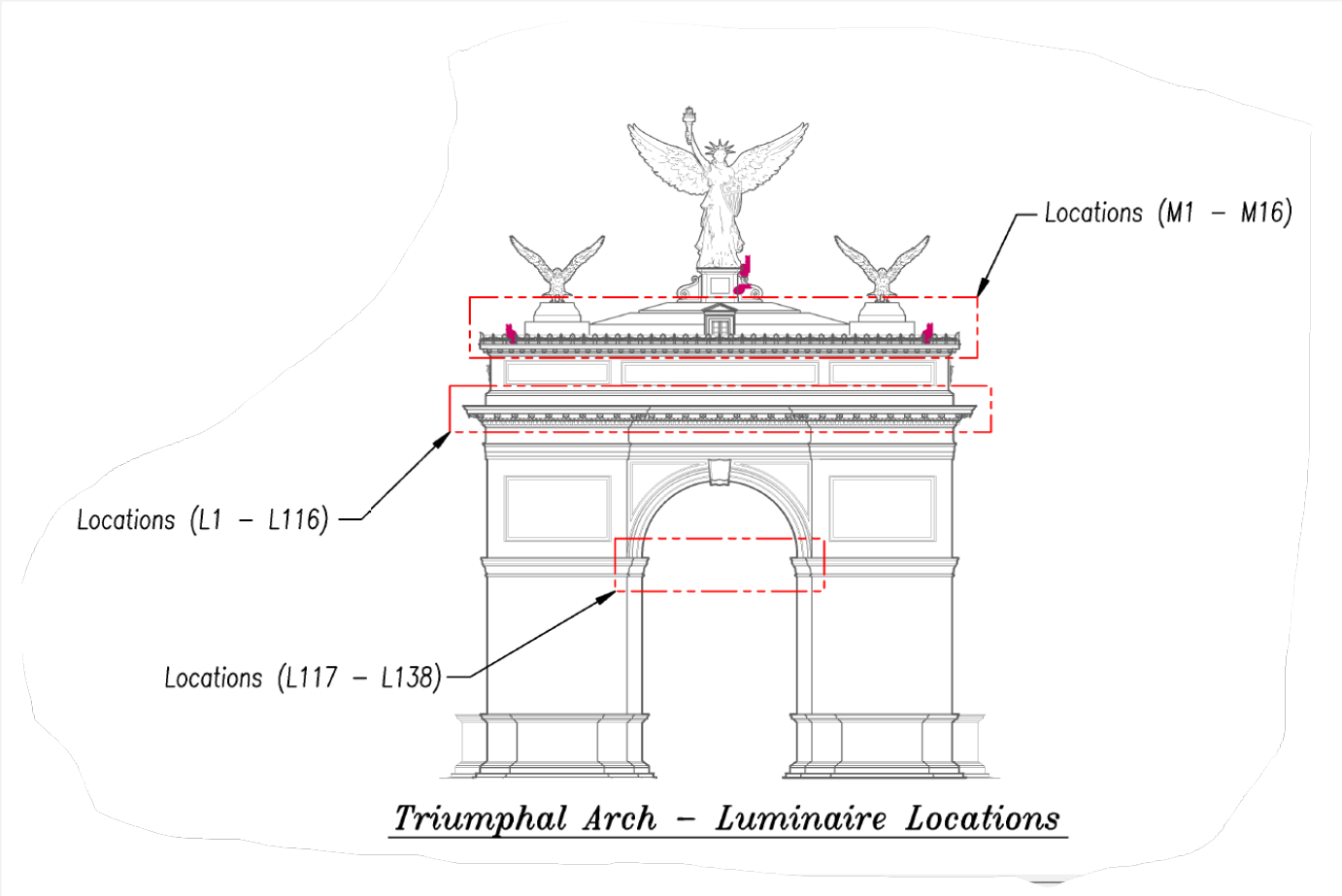
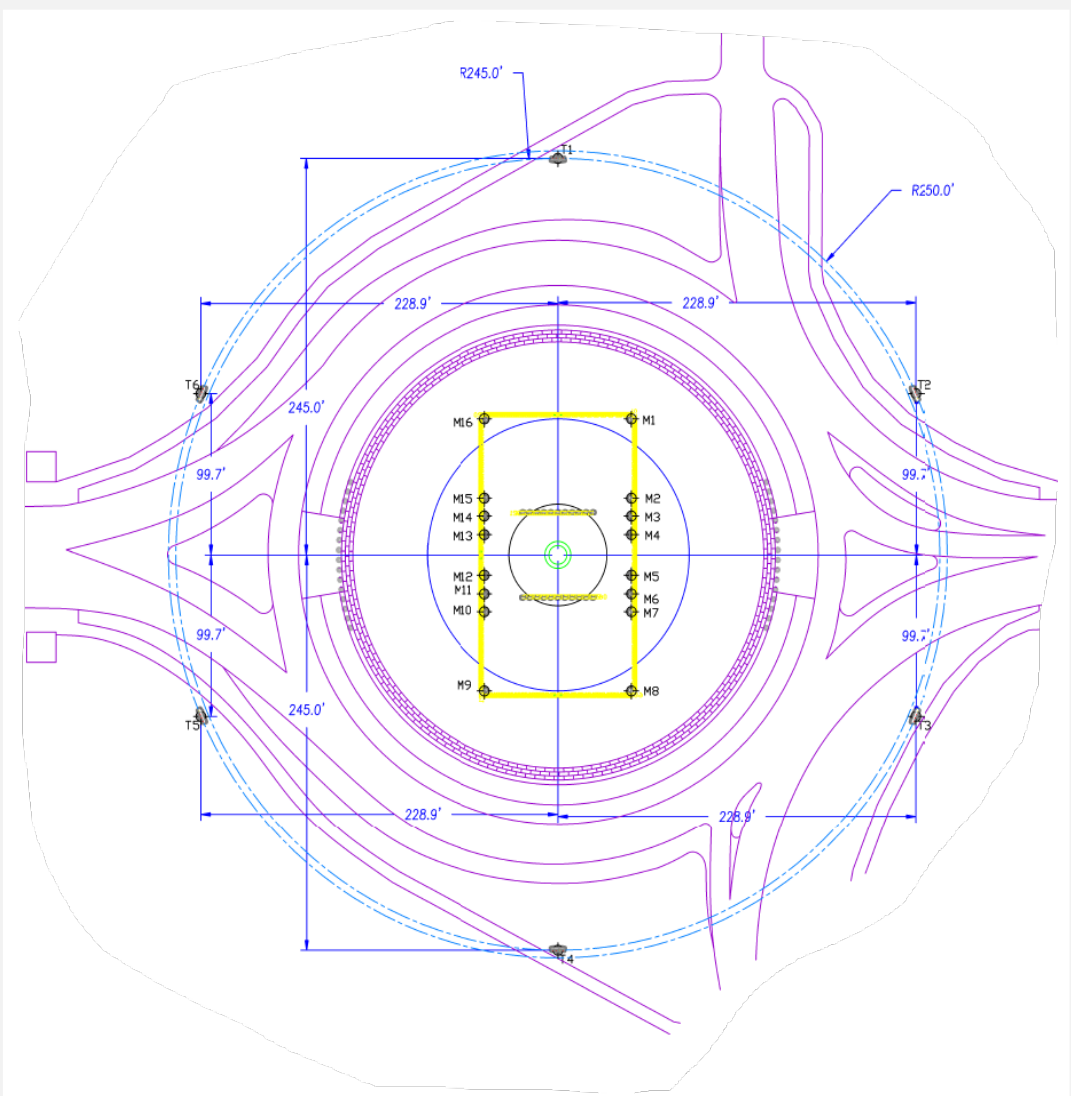
Final Lighting Rendering



Final Lighting Rendering



Final Lighting Plan



Final FAA Lighting Plan

On September 18, 2026 the FAA provided NPS with a “DETERMINATION OF NO HAZARD TO AIR NAVIGATION” finding for the Triumphal Arch. Section 7, provides the following condition for safety lighting; *“The proposed structure should be appropriately marked/lighted with a non-standard eternal flame and continuously floodlighted by searchlight projectors installed at three or more equidistant points around the base of the structure. The searchlight projectors should provide an average illumination of at least 15 foot-candles (161.46 lux) over the top one-third of the structure, in accordance with FAA AC 70/7460-1N, Paragraph 4.5, to make it more conspicuous to airmen.”*

Conceptual Eternal Flame

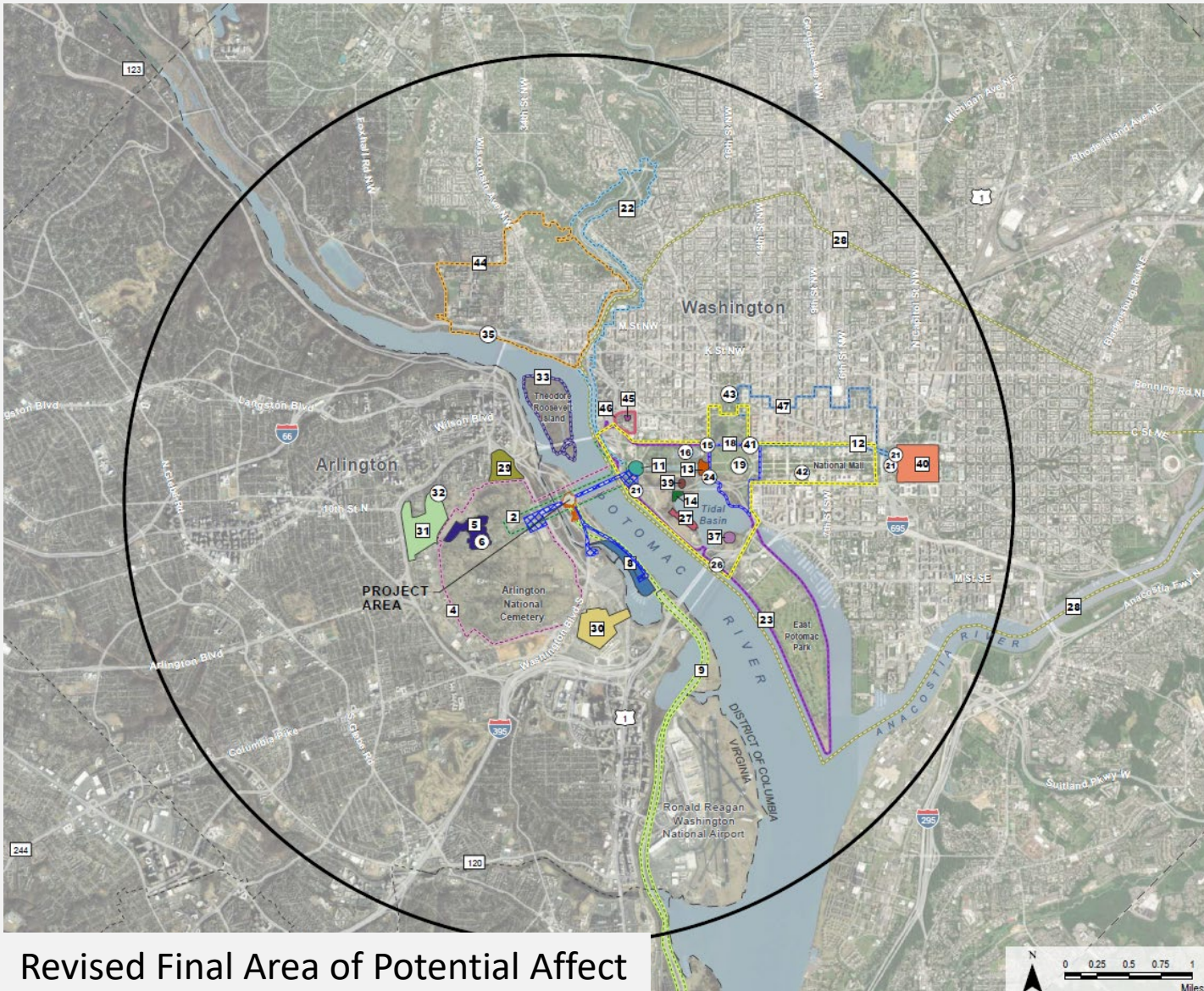


Environmental Considerations

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the NPS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the alternatives and evaluating the potential environmental effects associated with constructing the proposed Triumphal Arch on the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The EA was prepared in accordance with 516 DM 1, U.S. Department of the Interior, Handbook of National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures, February 2026 (DOI NEPA Handbook) and its appendices, along with the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 46.

The Environmental Assessment was completed in October 2026 and was submitted with the design materials. The FONSI documents the NPS's determination that the proposed Triumphal Arch in Memorial Circle would not result in significant environmental impacts. The final FONSI was signed on October 9, 2026.

Historical Considerations



Revised Final Area of Potential Affect

NPS initiated the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act on June 5, 2026. NPS prepared a draft Assessment of Effects and Memorandum of Agreement on June 5th and held consulting parties meetings on June 15th and September 9th. NCPC designated NPS lead agency for Section 106.

On September 22, 2026 NPS forwarded a summary of its consultation efforts for the proposed arch to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). On September 24, 2026, ACHP notified NPS and all consulting parties, including NCPC, that it had terminated consultation on the project pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.7(a)(4). ACHP held a meeting on September 29, 2026 to allow consulting parties to provide any views on this undertaking and proposed resolution of adverse effects. ACHP provided its final comments to the Secretary of Interior on October 9, 2026, and the Secretary of Interior responded, which officially concludes the Section 106 process according to the relevant regulations.