National Capital Planning Commission

New Monumental Arch

Memorial Avenue, Washington, DC

Approval of Preliminary and Final Site and Building Plans

United States Department of the Interior

July 9, 2026 | File: 8778

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: July 9, 2026

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

Applicant Request: Approval of Preliminary 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 preliminary and final site and building plans for a new Monumental Arch in Memorial Circle in Washington, D.C. for Commission approval. The Commission provided comments on the concept plans at the June 4, 2026 meeting. 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 granite and ornamented by a central winged 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 has submitted a legal memo outlining their opinion that the Heights of Buildings Act does not apply to federal buildings, including the proposed Arch.

The arch would include 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 proposed action would also include site development within and immediately around Memorial Circle. A paved public plaza would surround the arch inside the traffic circle. The plaza would be protected by a barricade seat wall generally located at the existing inner curb and by removable or retractable bollards at authorized vehicle access points. Exterior lighting would be installed to illuminate the arch and plaza, and the undertaking would include minimal exterior signage, perimeter and rooftop security cameras, access-control systems for major doors and nonpublic areas, interior and exterior video surveillance, and a security screening area with walk-through magnetometers, x-ray equipment, and explosive trace detection equipment. Vehicle access to the plaza would be restricted to authorized maintenance, contractor, law enforcement, and emergency vehicles.

The project would introduce new traffic signalization, pedestrian-actuated crossings, refuge islands, and circulation changes within and around Memorial Circle. During construction, westbound traffic from Arlington Memorial Bridge would be reduced, certain turning movements from Memorial Avenue and Washington Boulevard would be restricted, and the south sidewalk would be temporarily detoured. Post-construction, Memorial Circle would be fully signalized, with new pedestrian crossings providing access into the center of the circle. The design would also include narrower circulating roadway geometry, motorcoach accommodation, designated pickup and drop-off areas, and traffic-calming measures.

The plaza and interior facility would be operated as a controlled-access federal site. Authorized vehicle access would be managed by barricade walls and removable or retractable bollards. Visitors would queue between the Arch legs and enter a screening area equipped with walk-through magnetometers, x-ray machines, and explosive trace detection equipment. The site would include concentric layers of security through perimeter barriers, lighting, exterior and interior surveillance, access control on major and critical-path doors, and active patrol. The current operating concept assumes security screening is a key throughput constraint and would govern visitor access into the building.

Project Summary

The arch would be illuminated using a low spill, fully shielded lighting system designed to highlight the arch. In addition, aviation-required safety lighting would be incorporated into the design using the least intrusive technology available, ensuring compliance with aircraft visibility requirements while limiting unnecessary light emission.

The arch will be brilliantly illuminated at night, similar to other monuments and government edifices on the National Mall. Uplighting recessed into the ground at the plaza level and protected by transparent covers will light all major aspects of the arch. Additionally, smaller up lights above the impost base, entablature, and attic story will light the upper registers and center vaulting of the arch, to prevent any unsightly shadow lines that may be cast from the ground level uplighting. Directional lighting discretely mounted around the perimeter of the observation deck will light the surmounting statues from multiple angles. The high volume of lumens on the arch surface will create a glow that ensures even levels of ground lighting within the arch plaza. Illumination of the arch would be supplemented by eight light stanchions, ranging from 14 to 20 feet in height, strategically located around the intersection.

Based on current planning, construction would occur over approximately two to three years. Major phases would include site excavation; foundation and support-of-excavation work; structural concrete; precast cladding and interior rough-in; statue placement and ceiling installation; site hardscape, landscaping, and interior fit-out; and final restoration and demobilization. Temporary transportation changes would be required at the beginning of construction, during utility installation and major structure erection, and again at the end of construction to complete permanent circulation improvements.

Project Summary

The Commission previously provided comments and requested the following additional information:

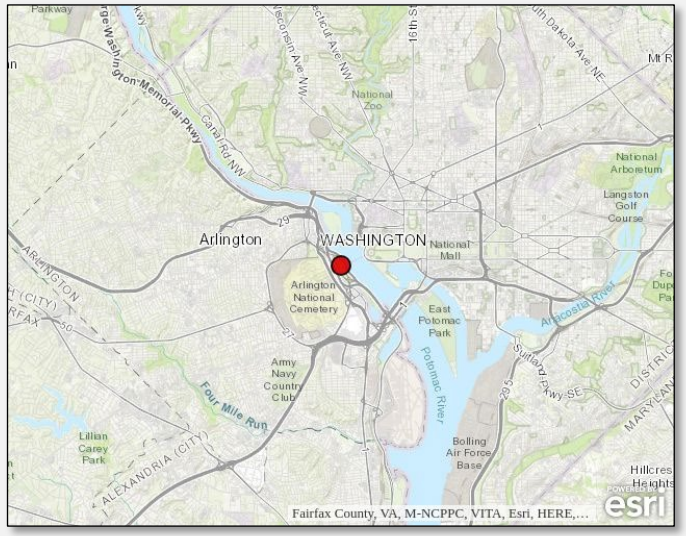
Requests the applicant submit for the next review:

- A transportation or traffic study that identifies any potential impacts of the proposed project on the road network and level of service, and evaluates the proposed pedestrian access to ensure that visitors can avoid pedestrian and vehicular conflicts; and
- Information regarding parking and loading/unloading for visitors to the arch to ensure safe access for those of all abilities and minimize disruption to the traffic network.
- A risk assessment and evaluation of the project to ensure that the proposed design will address security considerations.
- View from north steps of the Jefferson Memorial looking toward the Lincoln Memorial; and
- Views from the George Washington Memorial Parkway, one looking south toward the circle from a point immediately south of I-66, and one looking north toward the circle from a point near the LBJ Memorial Grove.
- An analysis and justification for the project's height in light of the Height of Buildings Act.
- The proposed arch and site materials palette, including cladding, paving, pedestrian features, and security elements.
- The proposed lighting strategy, including nighttime renderings from key views demonstrating the lighting concept in context.
- The proposed stormwater management strategy.
- Updates on the Section 106 process and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation process, as completion of both processes are required for NCPC final action.

Recommends the applicant continue consultation with the FAA to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed project on air navigation and provide an update to the Commission as part of the next review, work with the Federal Highway Administration, District Department of Transportation, Arlington County, and other agencies as appropriate regarding any proposed changes or impacts to the surface transportation network, work with the District Department of Energy & Environment regarding the proposed stormwater management approach, and work with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties regarding the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process.

Advises that any design recommendations provided by the FAA should be incorporated into the proposed project prior to the Commission's final action.

Site Location



Location Map

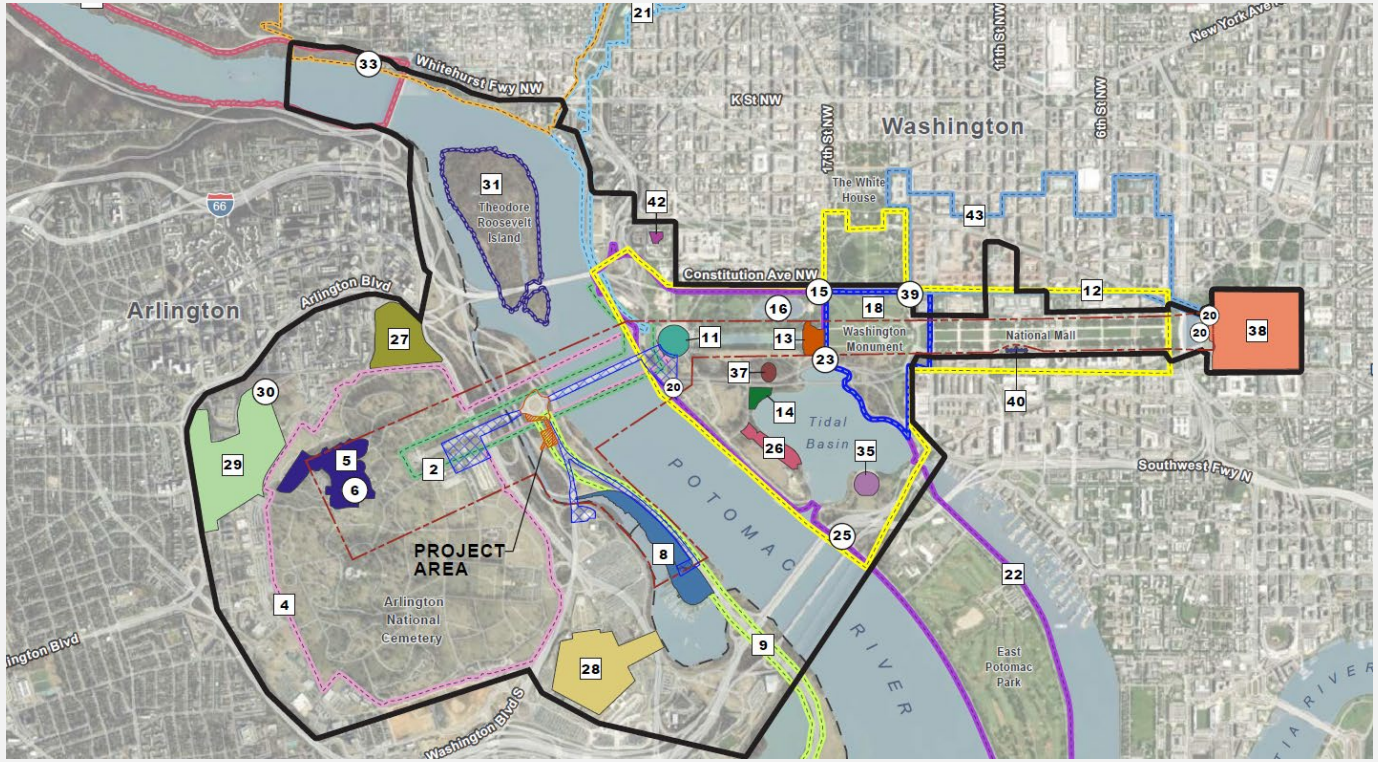
Project Location

Proposed Project

The proposed action would include site development within and immediately around Memorial Circle. A paved public plaza would surround the Arch inside the traffic circle. The plaza would be protected by a barricade seat wall generally located at the existing inner curb and by removable or retractable bollards at authorized vehicle access points. Exterior lighting would be installed to illuminate the Arch and plaza, and the undertaking would include minimal exterior signage, perimeter and rooftop security cameras, access-control systems for major doors and nonpublic areas, interior and exterior video surveillance, and a security screening area with walk-through magnetometers, x-ray equipment, and explosive trace detection equipment. Vehicle access to the plaza would be restricted to authorized maintenance, contractor, law enforcement, and emergency vehicles.

Description of Project Area

The immediate project area is located within the Memorial Avenue Corridor cultural landscape, a nationally significant historic designed landscape extending between the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The corridor consists of the Watergate Steps, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Entrance, Arlington Memorial Bridge, Memorial Circle, Memorial Avenue Bridge over Boundary Channel, Memorial Avenue, and the ceremonial entrance sequence into Arlington National Cemetery at the Arlington Hemicycle. Memorial Circle serves as the link between the Arlington Memorial Bridge and Memorial Avenue, providing a hub to secondary destinations and routes within a compressed urban geography. The circular travel pattern provides a scenic route for commuters to experience the Memorial Avenue Corridor. The entirety of the corridor forms a major component of the monumental core of Washington, D.C. and was conceived as both a ceremonial gateway to the nation's capital and a symbolic landscape commemorating national unity and reconciliation following the Civil War.



LEGEND

- Area of Potential Effects
- Direct Effects Boundary
- Project Area
- Construction Staging Area
- Potential Utility Corridors

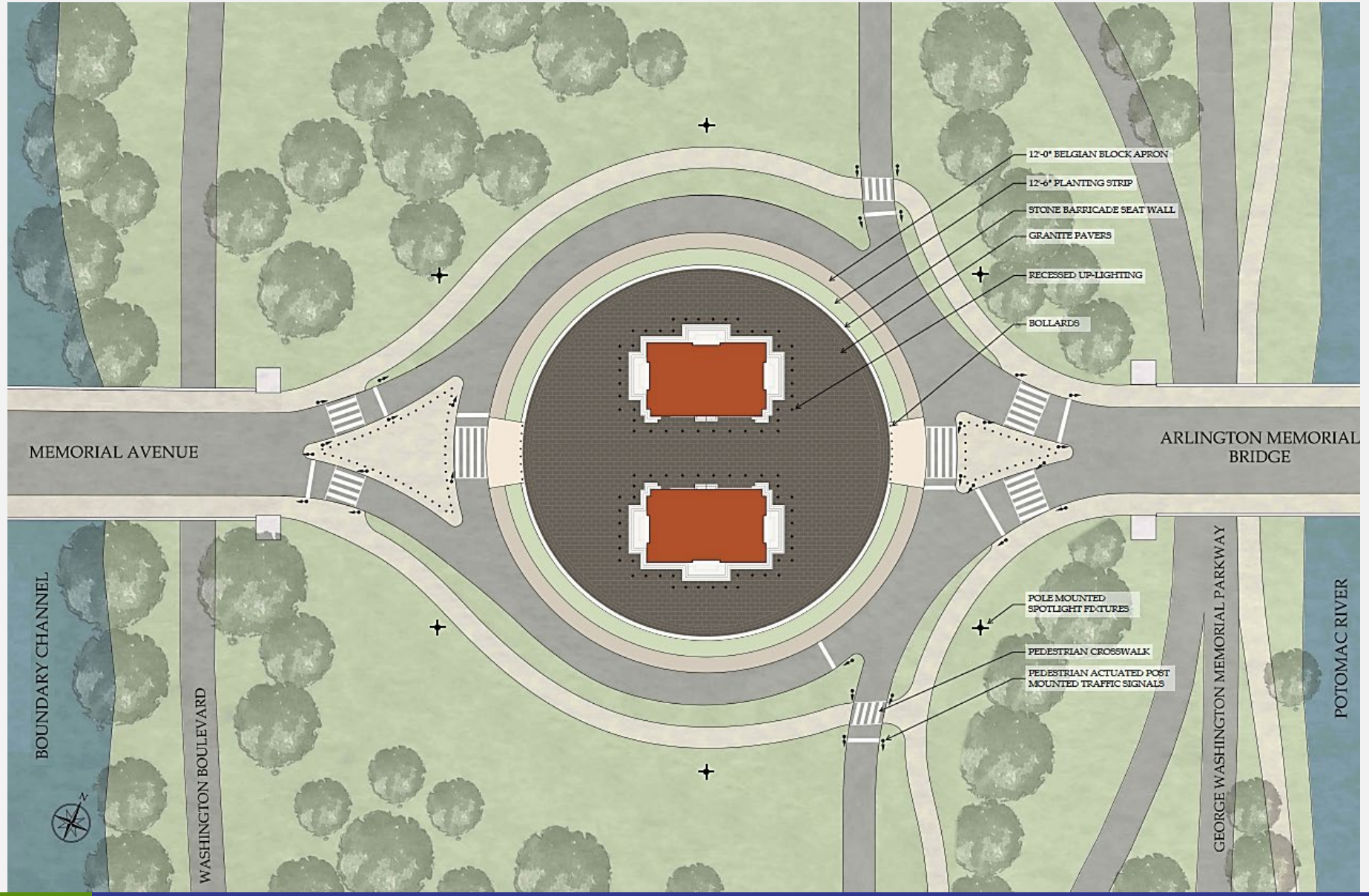
Individual Structures

- 6 Arlington House (Robert E. Lee Memorial)
- 15 Lockkeeper's House, C & O Canal Extension
- 16 56 Signers Memorial
- 20 Civil War Monuments in Washington, D.C. (Adjacent Lands)
- 23 American Revolutionary Statuary in the District of Columbia
- 25 Cuban Friendship Urn
- 30 Quarters 1 (NHL- Adjacent Lands)
- 33 Washington Canoe Club
- 38 U.S. Capitol Gatehouses and Gateposts

District Boundaries

- 2 Arlington Memorial Bridge and Related Features
- 4 Arlington National Cemetery Historic District
- 5 Arlington House Historic District (also known as Robert E. Lee Historic District)
- 8 Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove on the Potomac
- 9 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway
- 11 Lincoln Memorial
- 12 National Mall
- 13 World War II Memorial
- 14 Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial
- 18 Washington Monument and Grounds Historic District
- 21 Rock Creek Park and Potomac Parkway Historic District
- 22 East and West Potomac Parks Historic District
- 26 Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- 27 Arlington Ridge Park
- 28 Pentagon (NHL- Adjacent Lands)
- 29 Fort Myer Historic District (NHL- Adjacent Lands)
- 31 Theodore Roosevelt Island
- 35 Thomas Jefferson Memorial
- 37 DC War Memorial
- 38 United States Capitol (NHL- Adjacent Lands)
- 40 Smithsonian Building (NHL- Adjacent Lands)
- 41 Georgetown Historic District (NHL- NPS and Adjacent Lands)
- 42 Old Naval Observatory (NHL- Adjacent Lands)
- 43 Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site

Proposed Site Plan



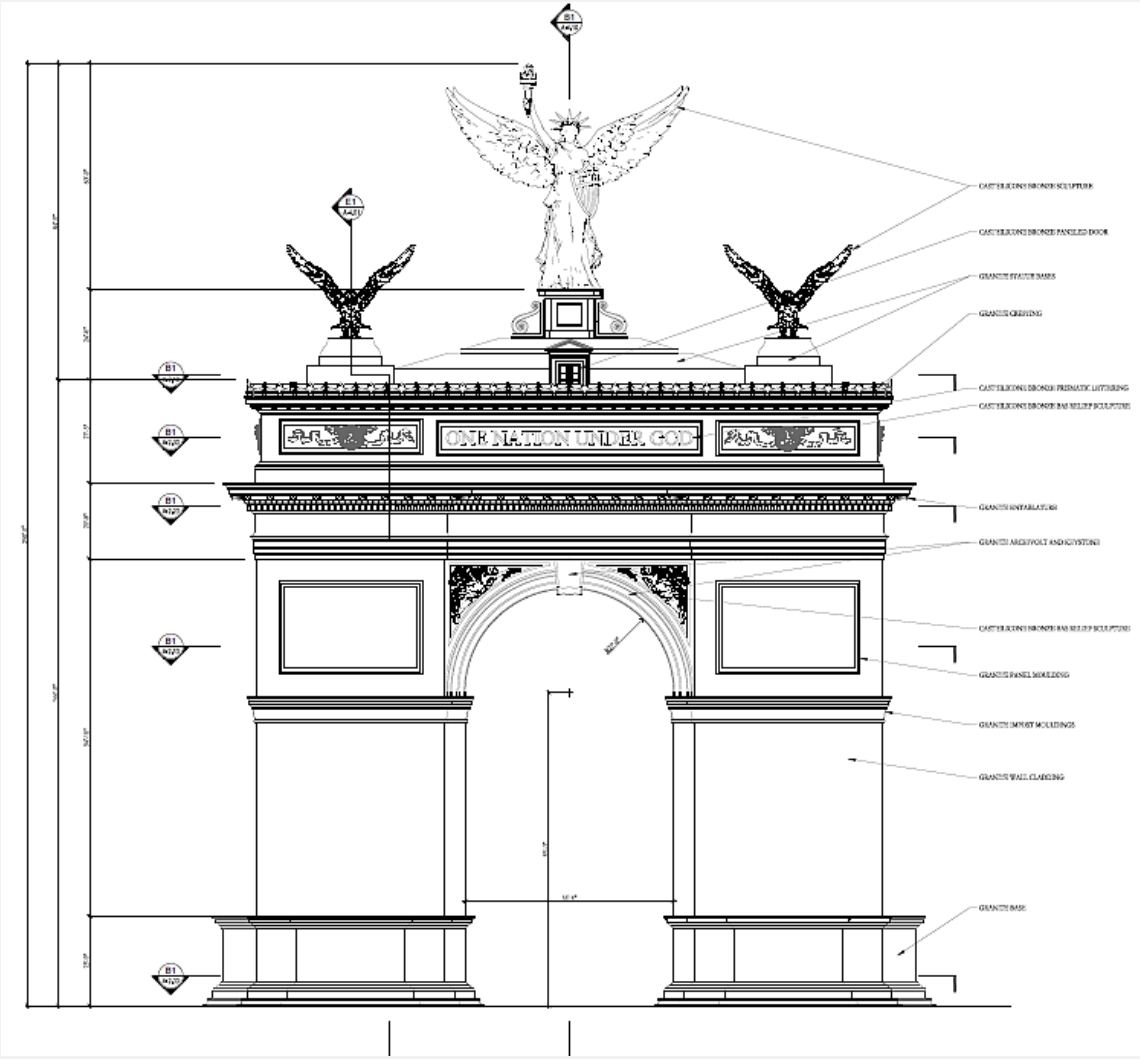
Proposed Elements:

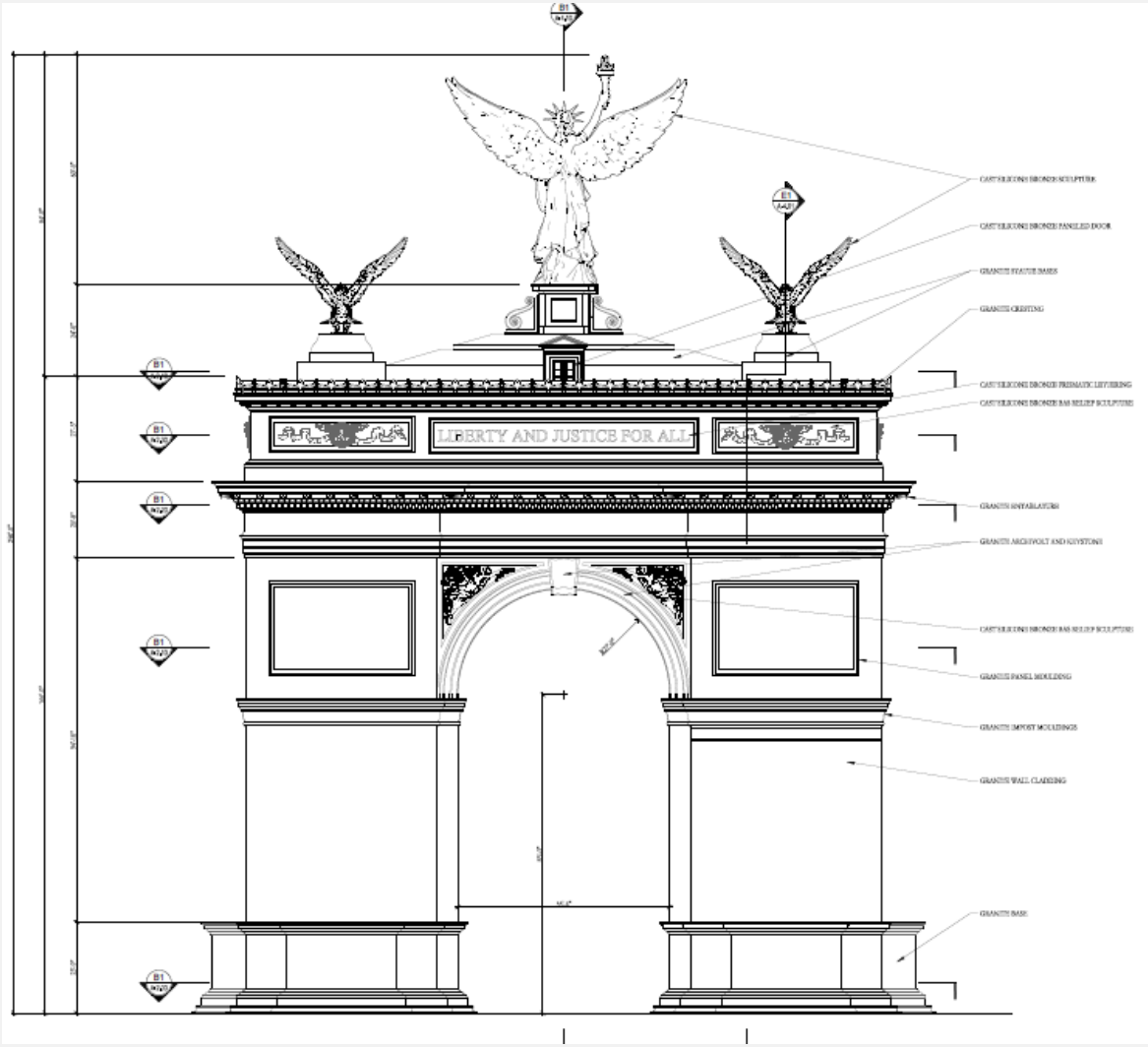
- Belgian Block Apron
- Planting Strip
- Stone Seat Wall
- Granite pavers
- Recessed Up-Lights
- Bollards
- Pole Mounted Spotlight
- Pedestrian Crosswalk
- Traffic Signals

Proposed Architectural and Design Program

Design

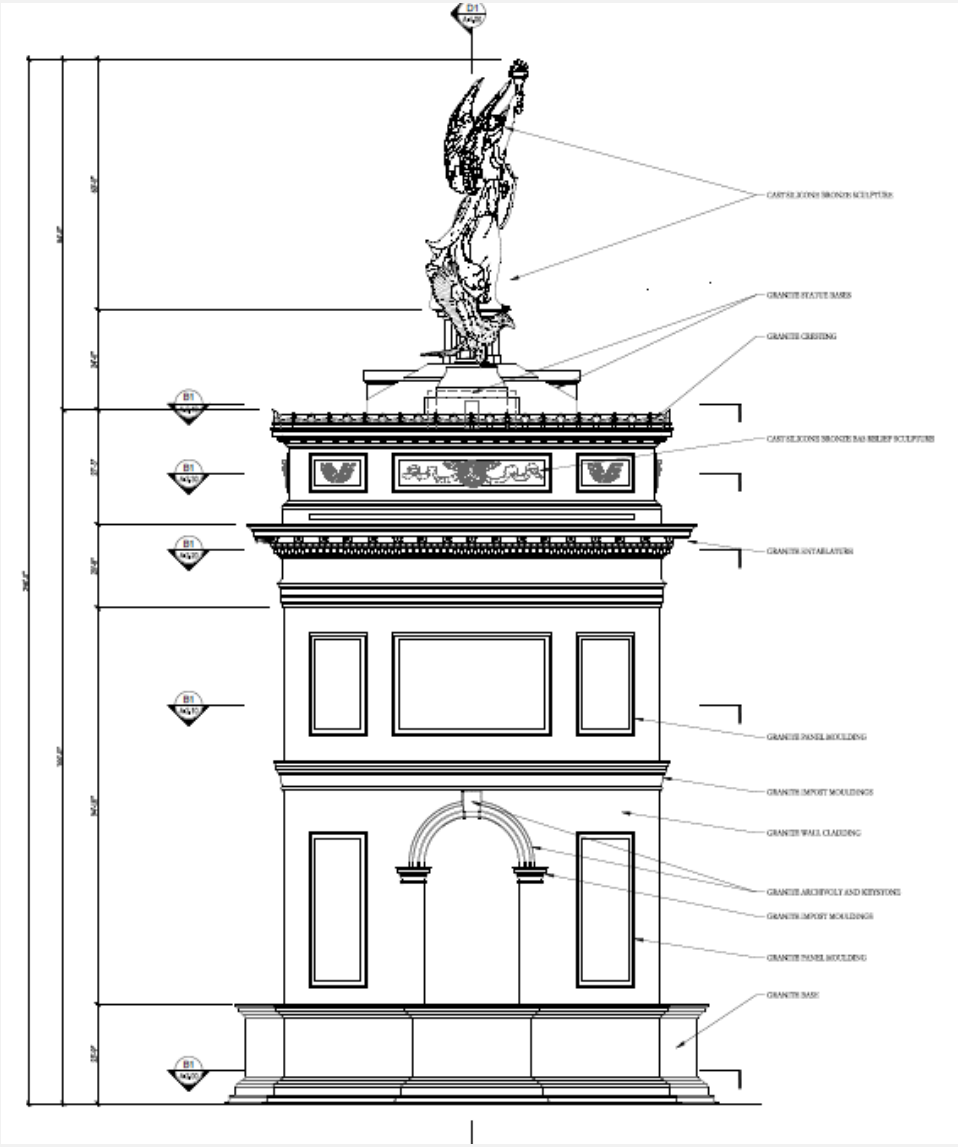
Proposed Architectural and Design Program



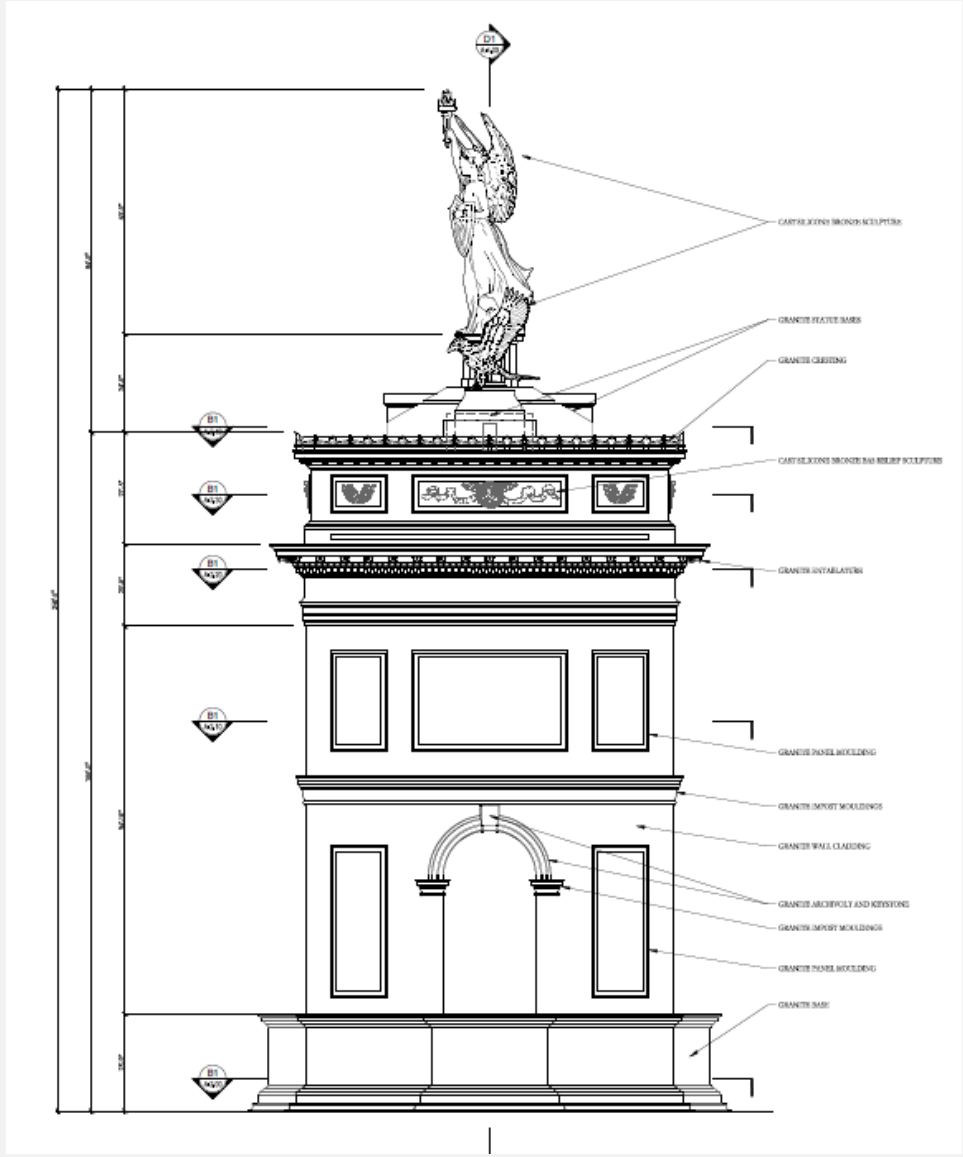


Elevations

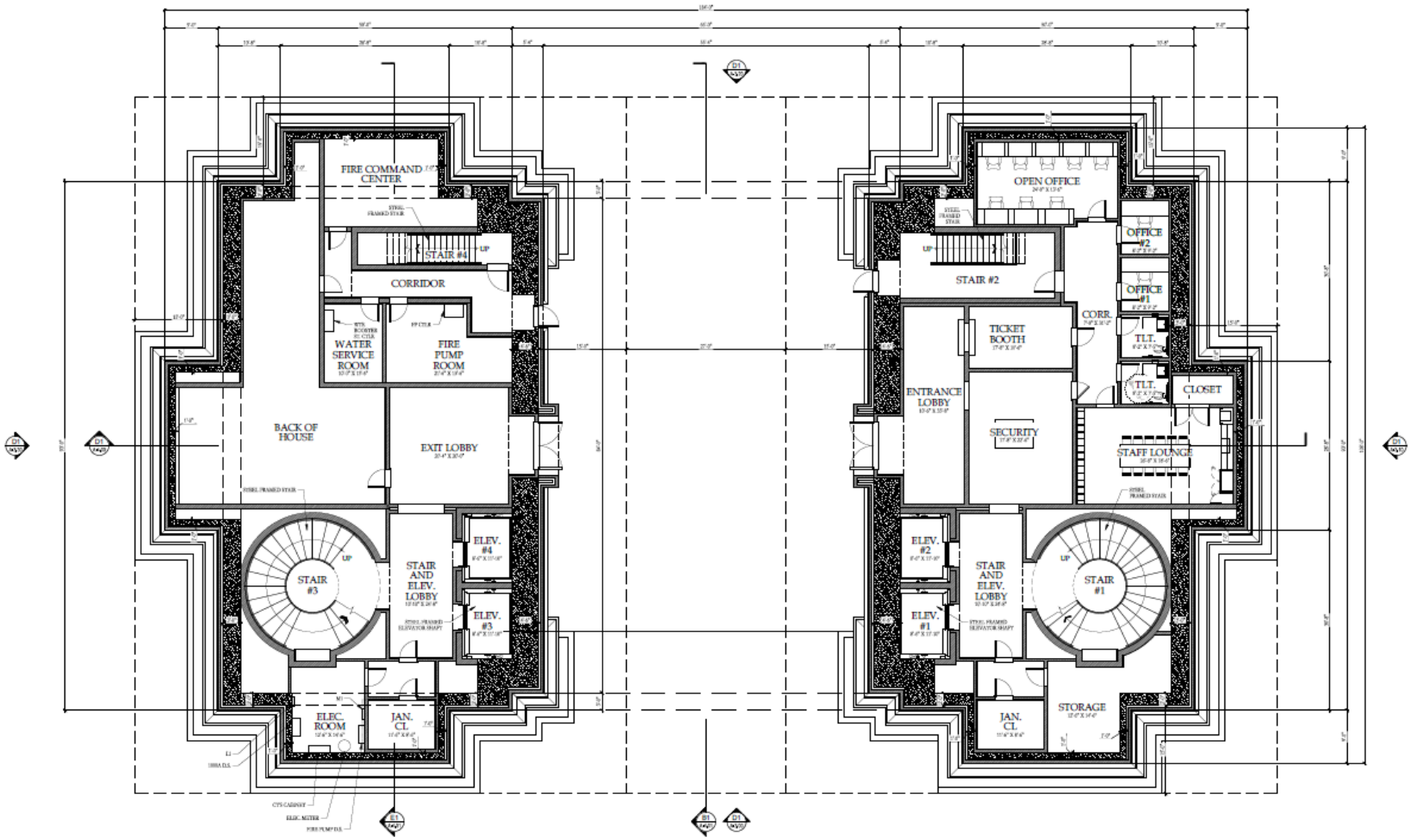
Proposed Architectural and Design Program



Elevations



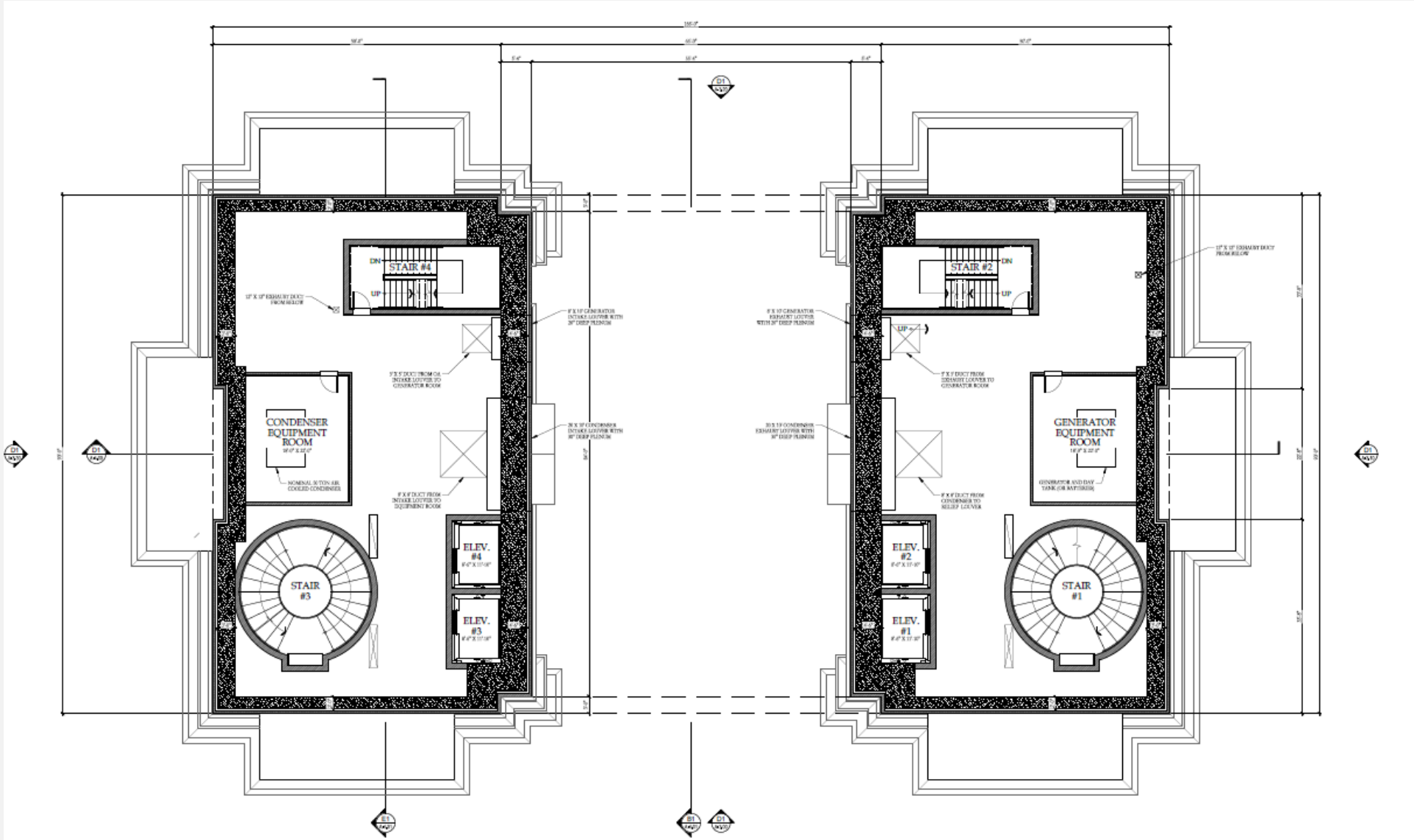
Proposed Architectural and Design Program



Floor plans - Base

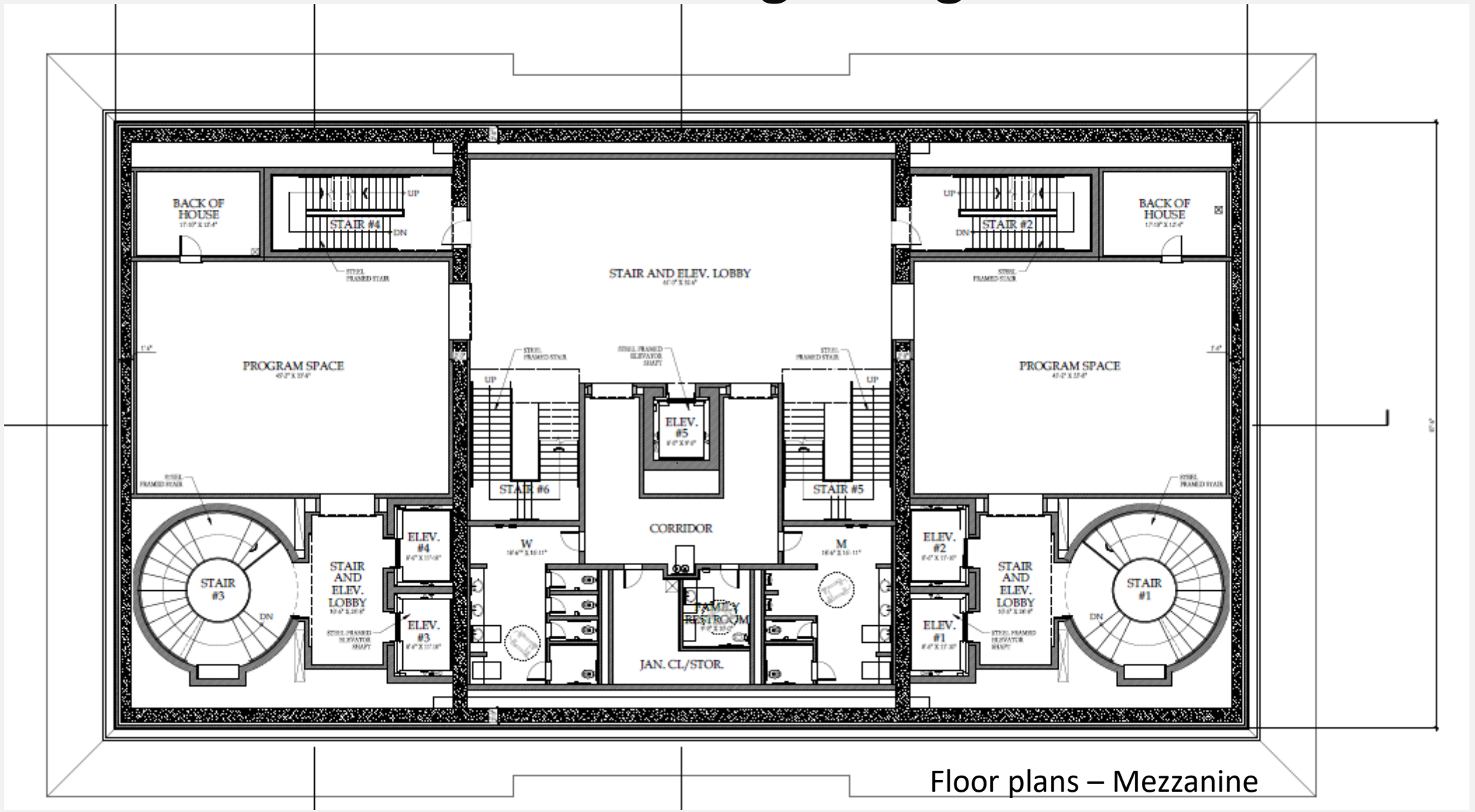
The building program includes security screening and vertical circulation at the ground level; mechanical and support functions at the mezzanine levels; exhibit, visitor support, restroom, and potential café/gift shop functions at the gallery level; and an observation deck at the uppermost public level. The project is designed to function as a screened federal visitor facility with timed entry, restricted authorized vehicle access to the plaza, and integrated interior and exterior security systems. The project would also include substantial lighting, both for architectural illumination and site safety, as well as aviation safety lighting required by applicable approvals.

Proposed Architectural and Design Program



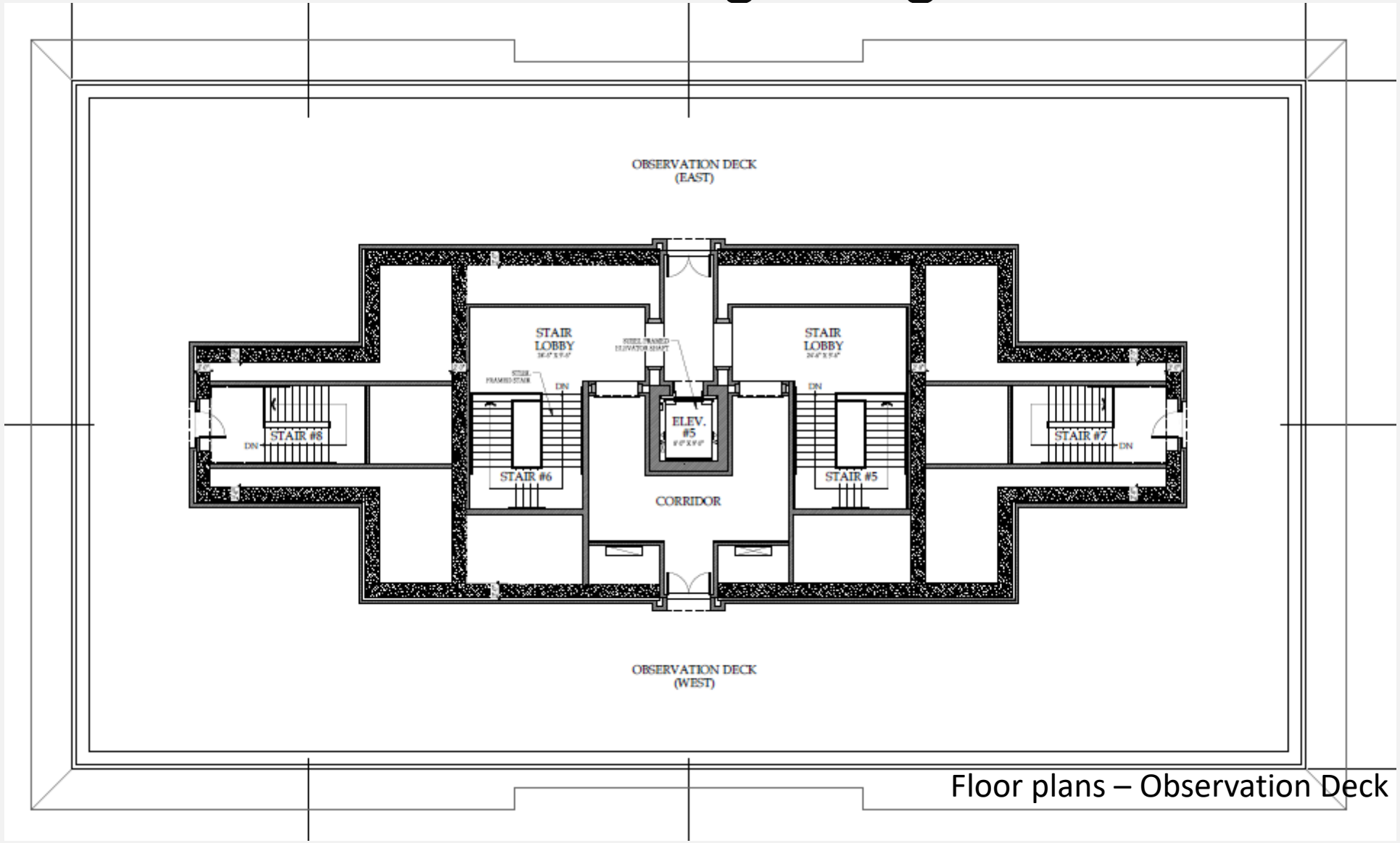
Floor plans - Legs

Proposed Architectural and Design Program



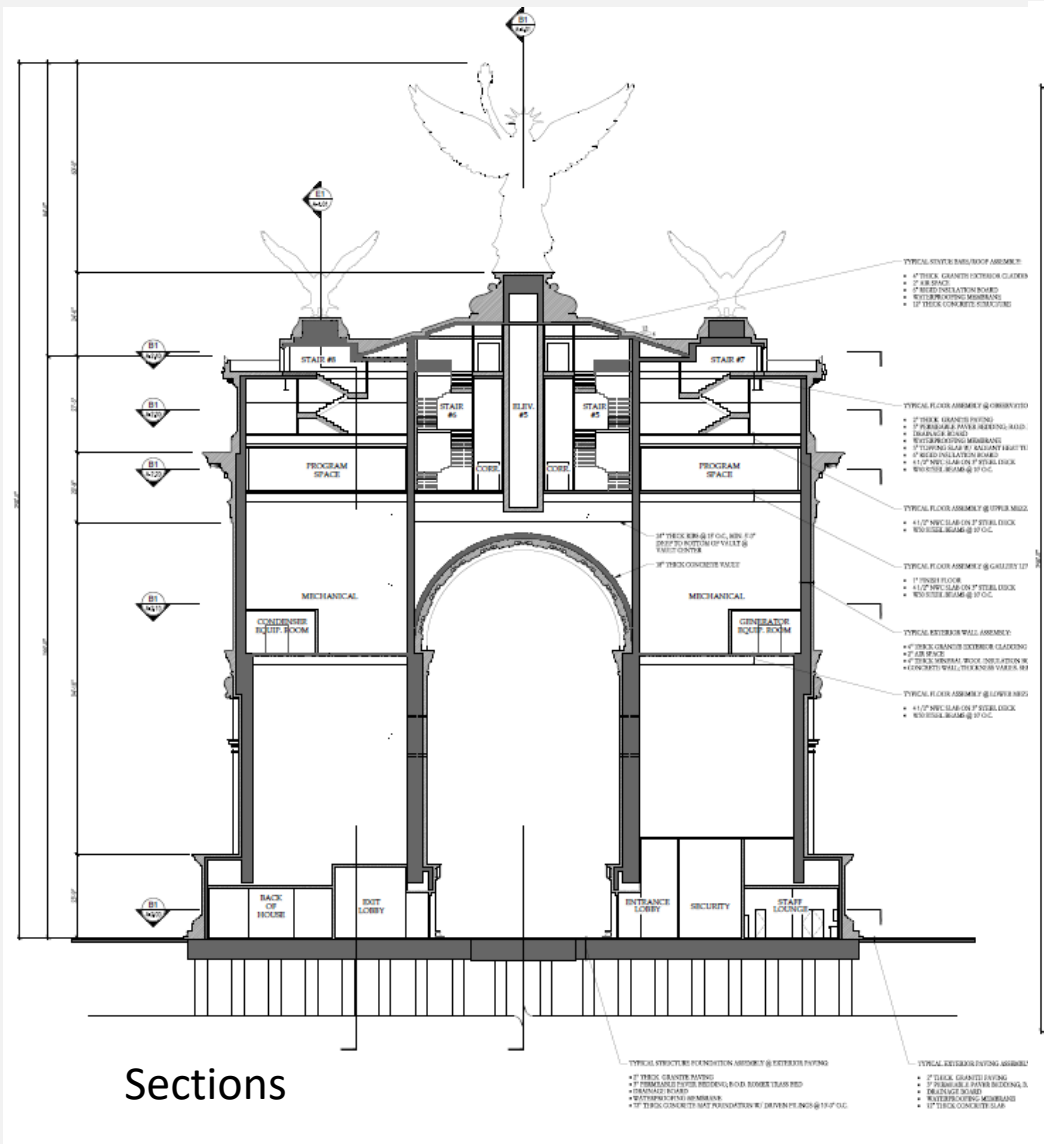
Floor plans – Mezzanine

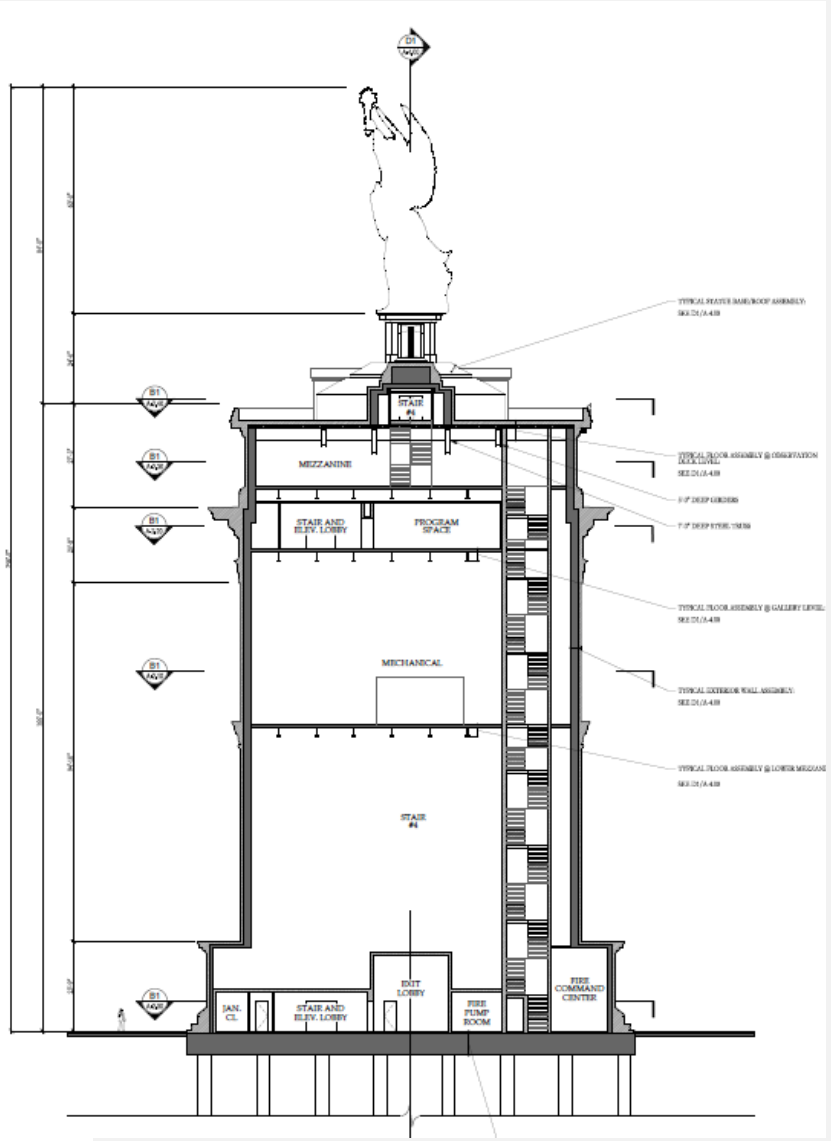
Proposed Architectural and Design Program

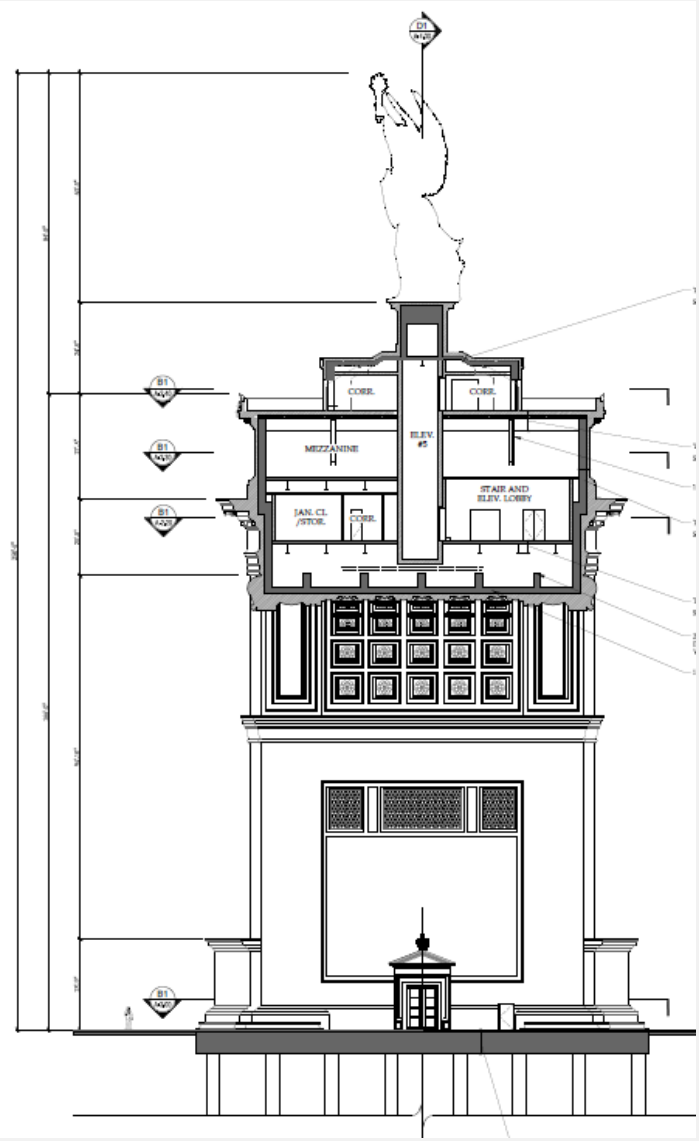


Floor plans – Observation Deck

Proposed Architectural and Design Program





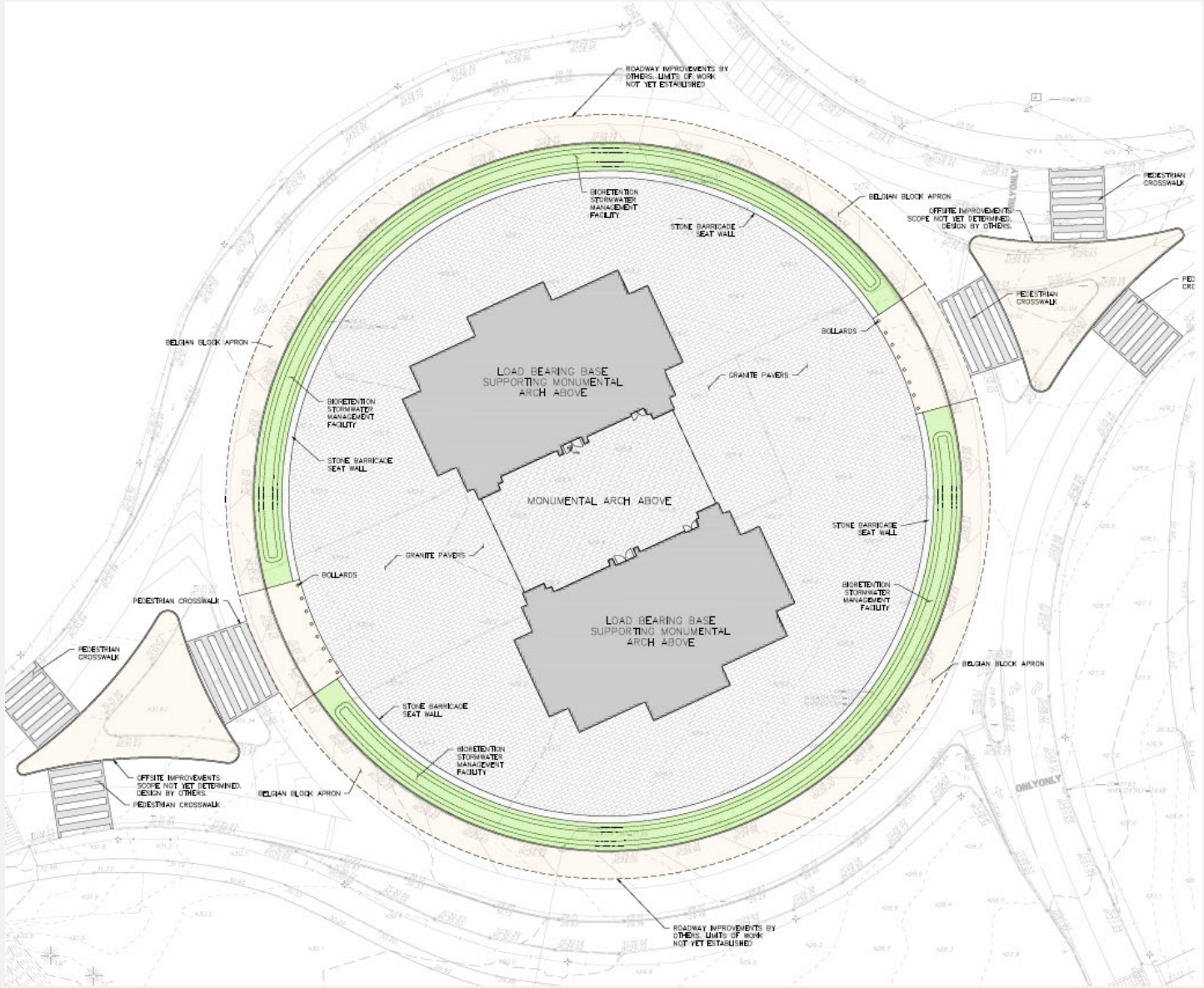


Sections

Proposed Architectural and Design Program

Rendering

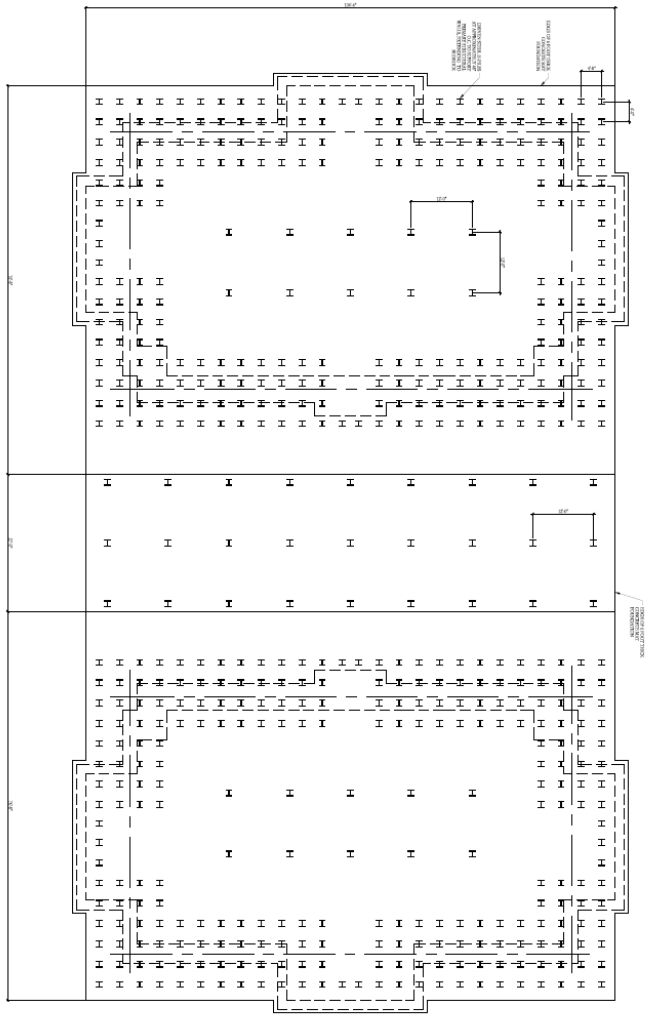
Proposed Architectural and Design Program



LEGEND:

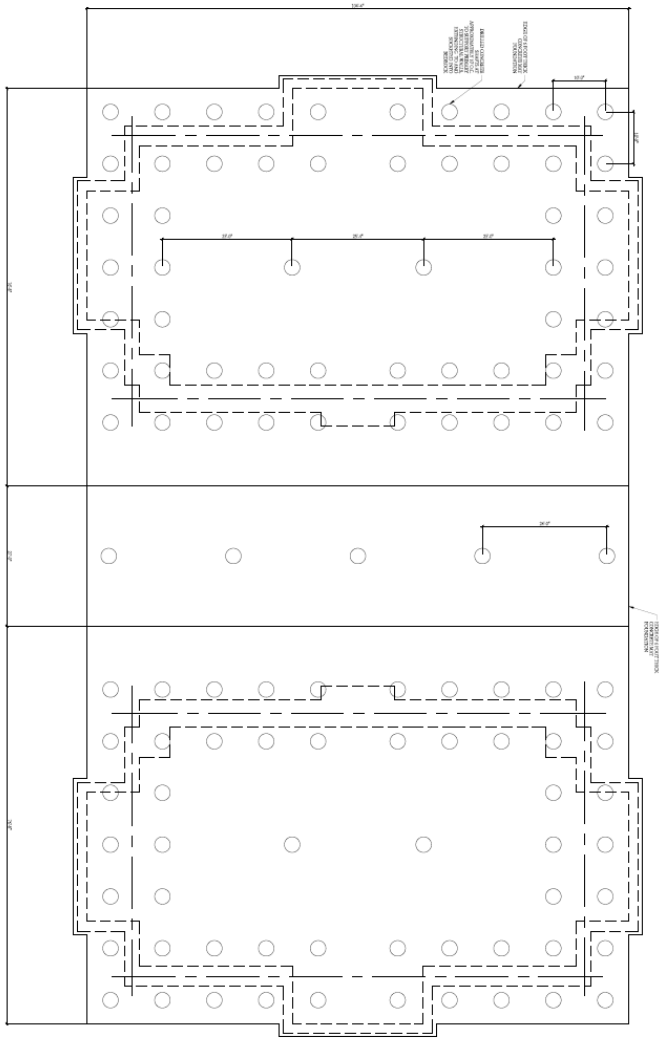
LOAD BEARING BASE SUPPORTING MONUMENTAL ARCH ABOVE	
ARCH OVERHEAD	
GRANITE PAVERS	
LANDSCAPE	

Proposed Architectural and Design Program



Support structure Option 1

Support structure Option 2

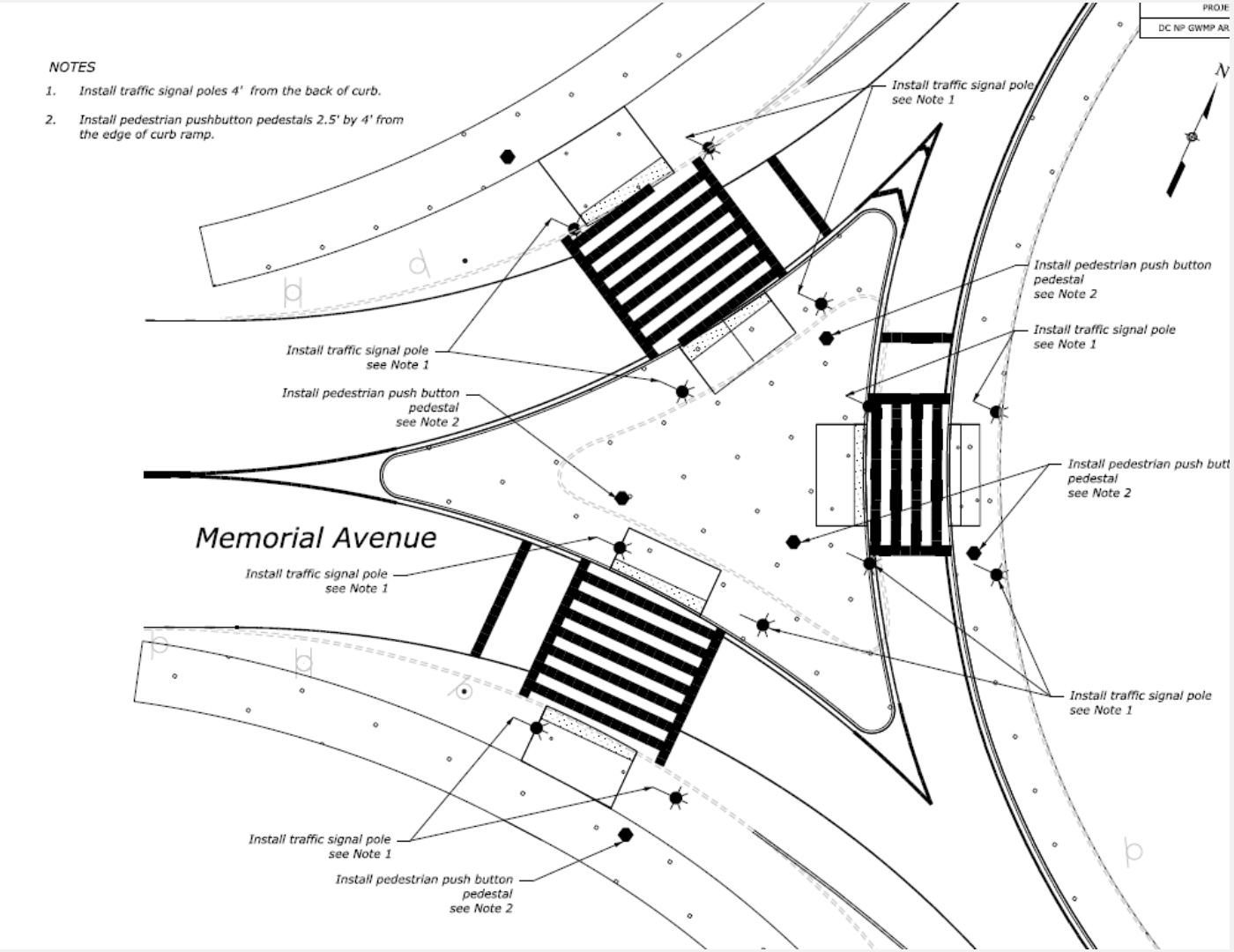


Support structure Option 3

Existing Tree Survey and Inventory

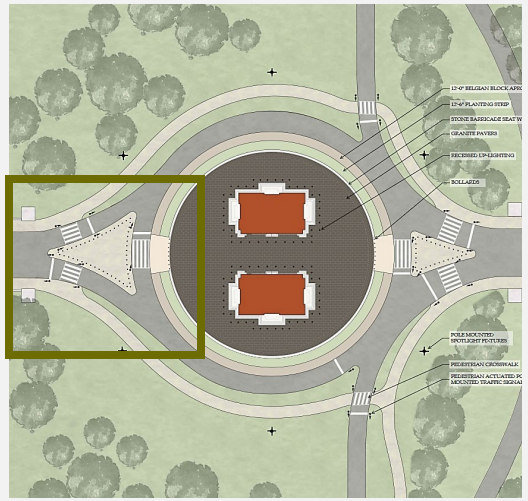
A tree inventory was completed for the monument area and the anticipated construction laydown area south of Memorial Circle. No trees are located within the lawn area at the center of the traffic circle where the Arch is proposed. The surveyed trees surrounding the project area are primarily in fair to good condition, and current civil planning materials indicate that tree removal is not anticipated for the laydown area at this stage. Construction staging and temporary work areas would need to remain outside critical root zones, and protective fencing and maintenance measures would be required during construction.

Proposed Transportation and Circulation



Proposed Elements:

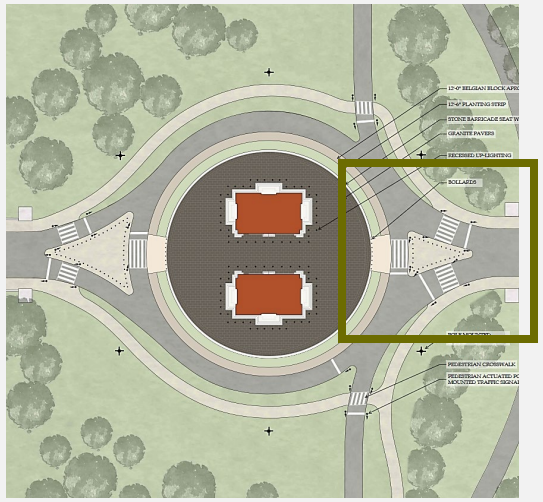
- Install 4 traffic signal poles per crosswalk
- Install 1 pedestrian push button pedestal per crosswalk
- Install 3 crosswalks to traffic island

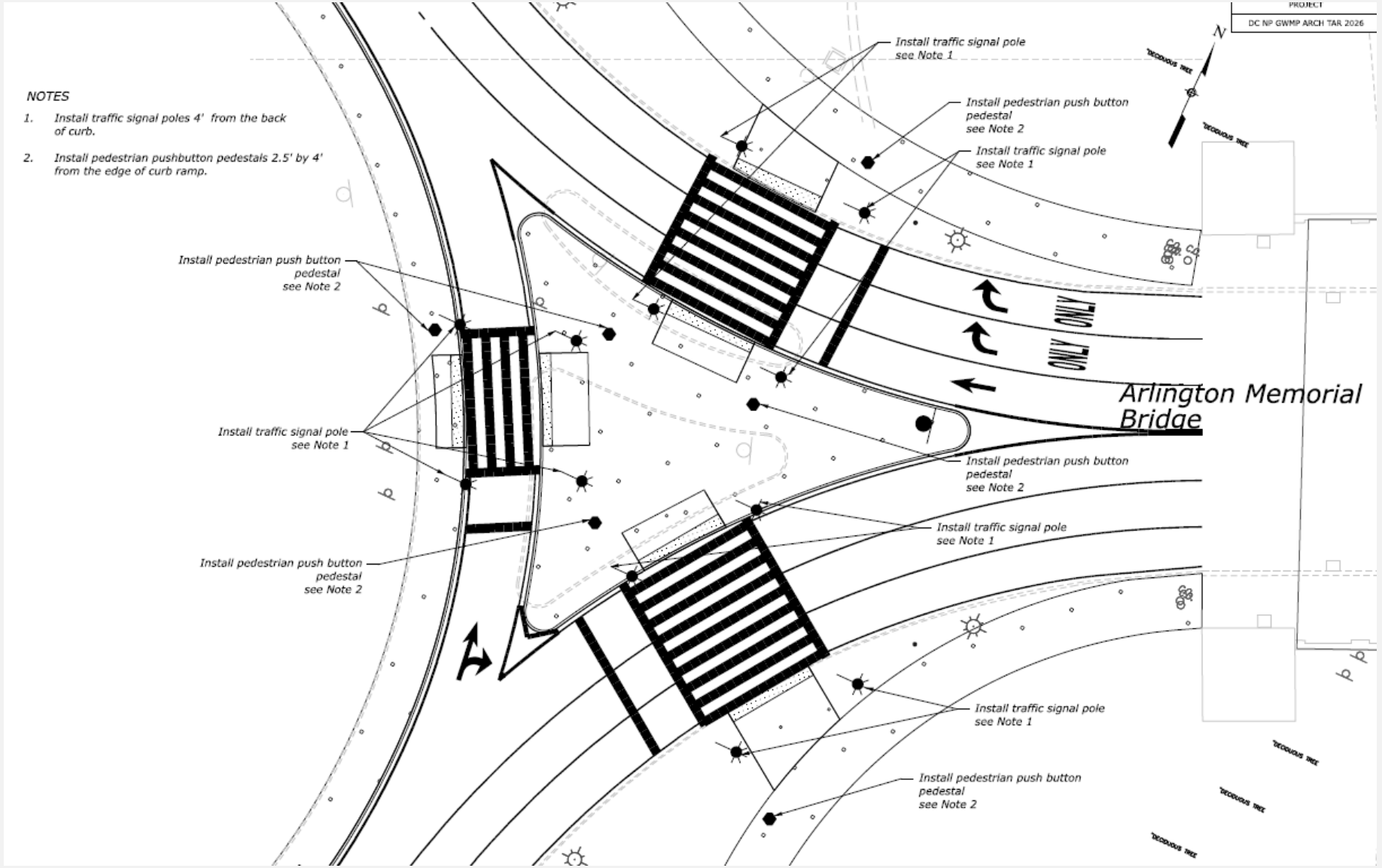


Proposed Transportation and Circulation

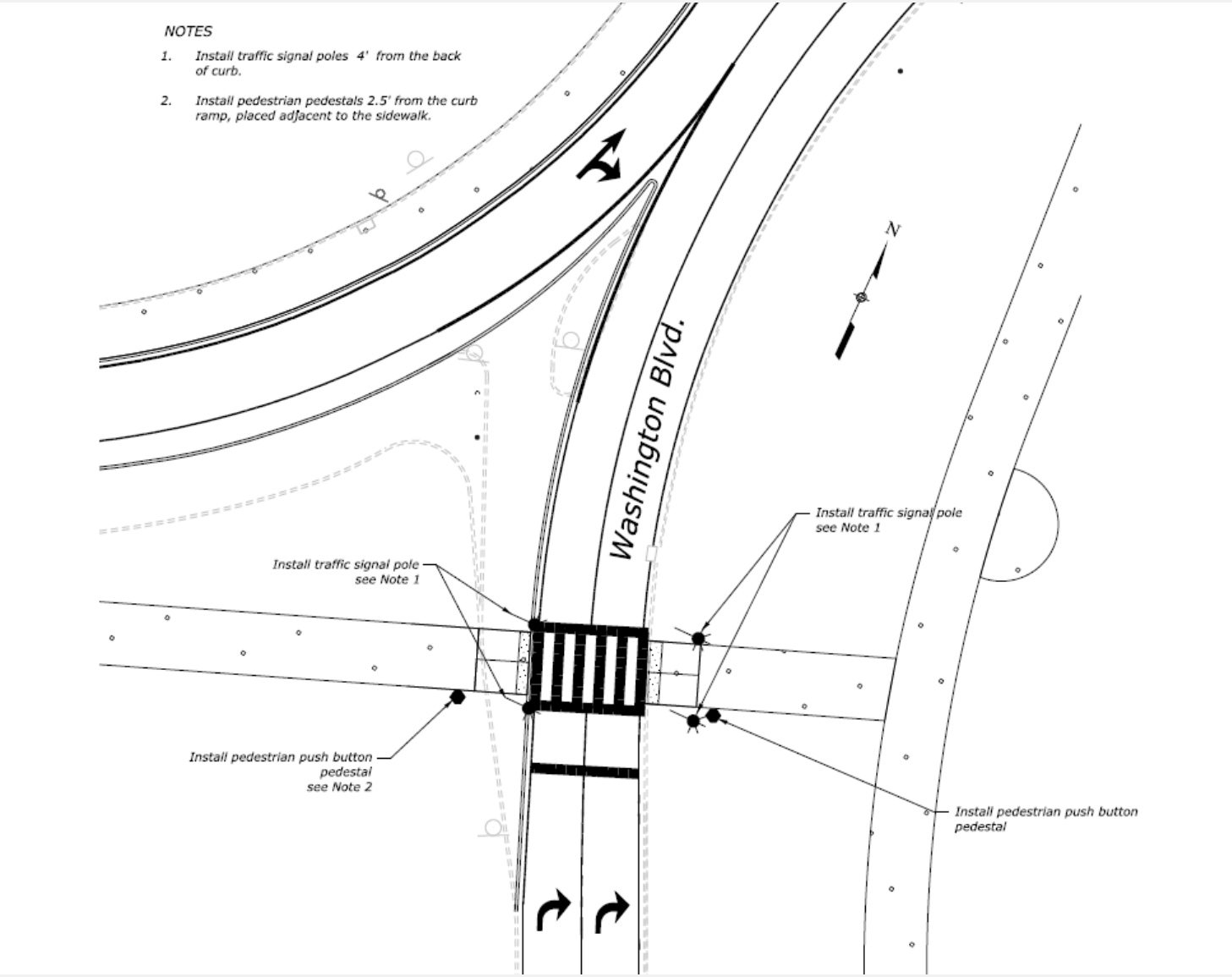
Proposed Elements:

- Install 4 traffic signal poles per crosswalk
- Install 1 pedestrian push button pedestal per crosswalk
- Install 3 crosswalks to traffic island
- Modify two smaller islands into one larger island

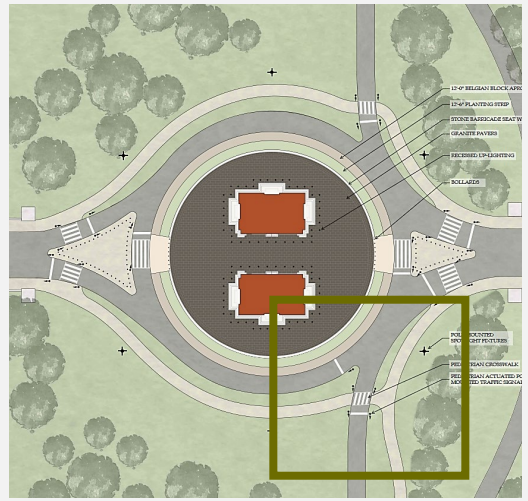




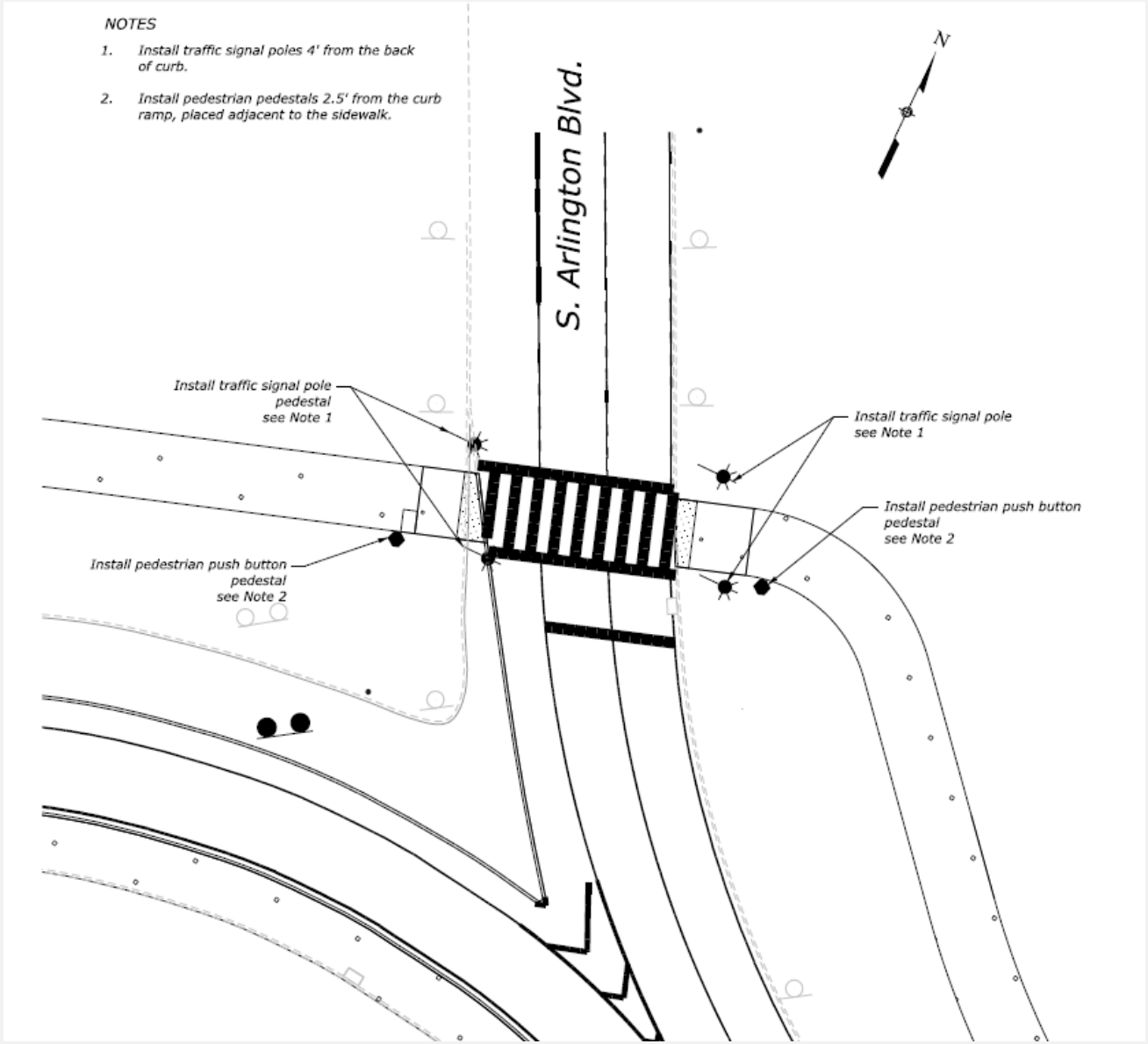
Proposed Transportation and Circulation



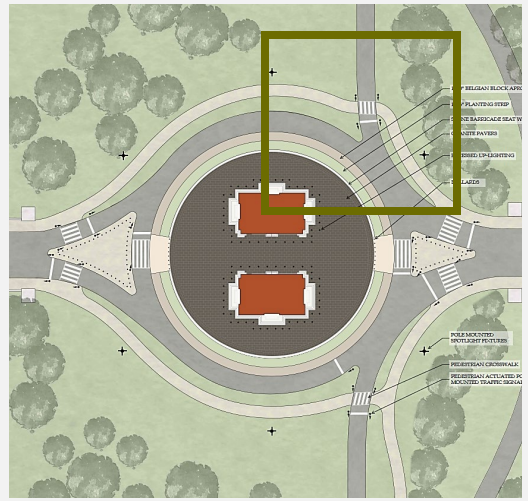
- Remove left turn lane for northbound and westbound movements
- Add 4 traffic signal poles
- Add a pedestrian push button pedestal
- Remove existing path and crossing
- Add new path and crosswalk with stop bar



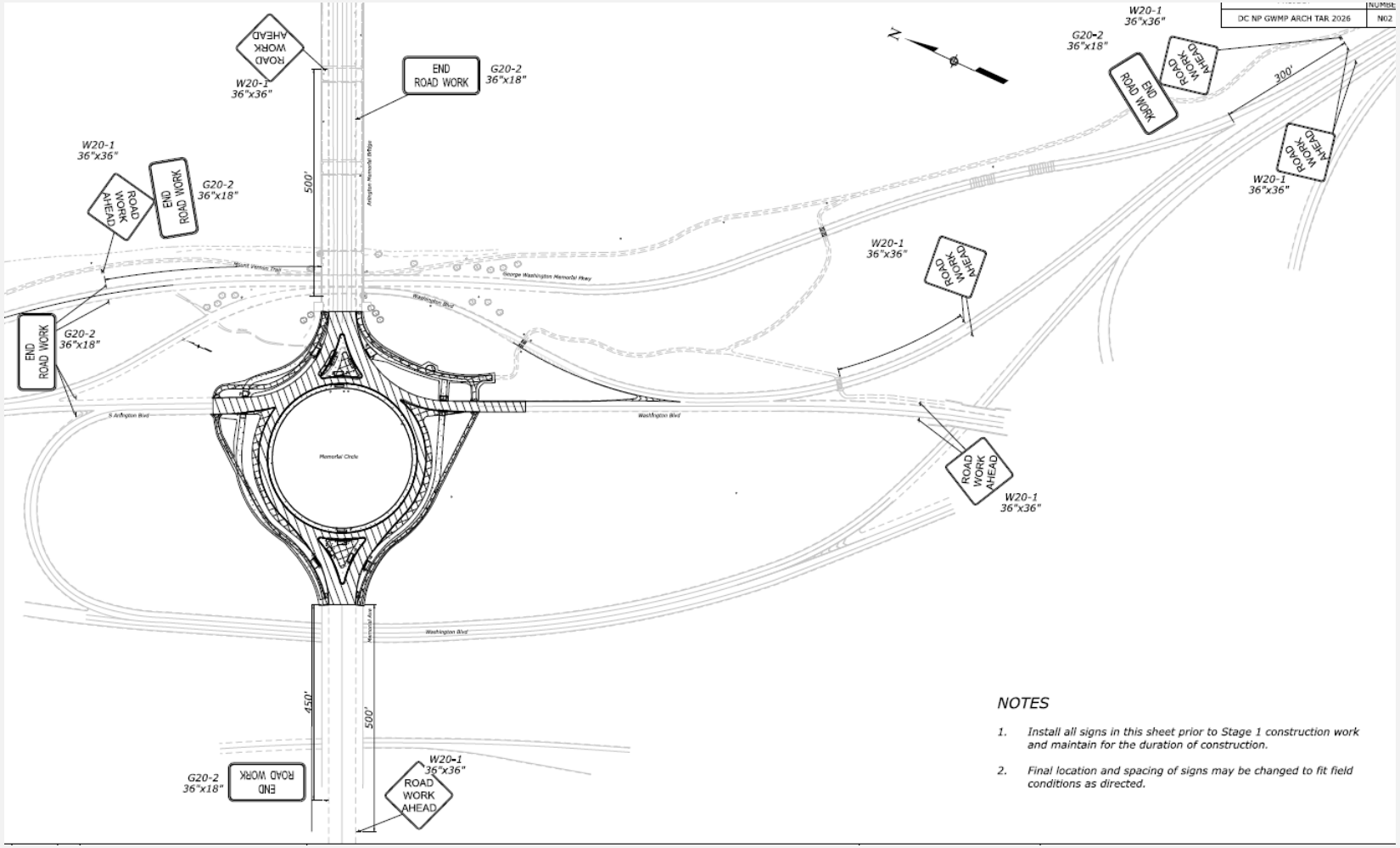
Proposed Transportation and Circulation



- Add 4 traffic signal poles
- Add new crosswalk and stop bar
- Add pedestrian push button pedestal
- Remove existing path and crossing

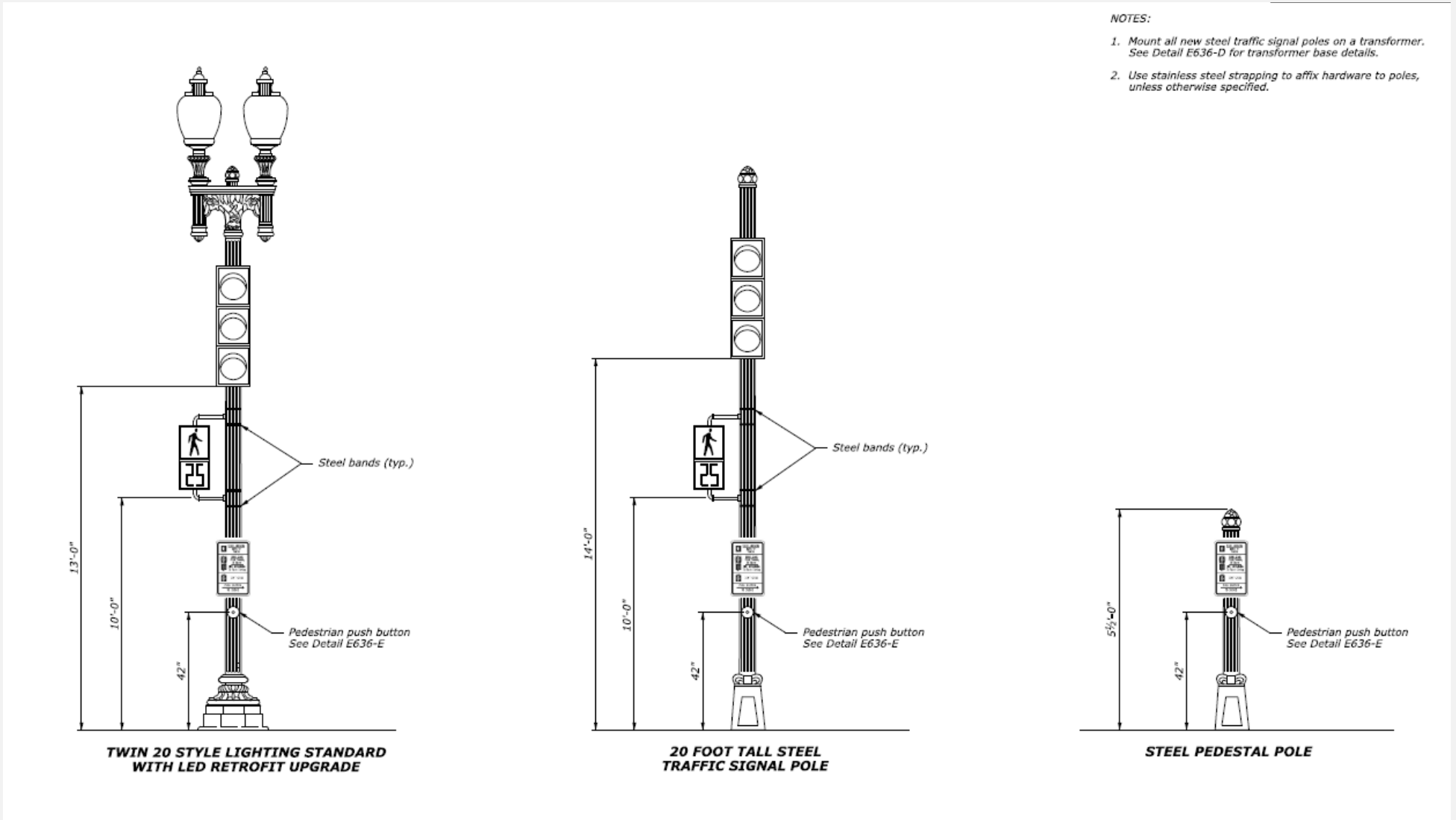


Proposed Transportation and Circulation



Example plan for signage and wayfinding during a portion of construction on Memorial Circle

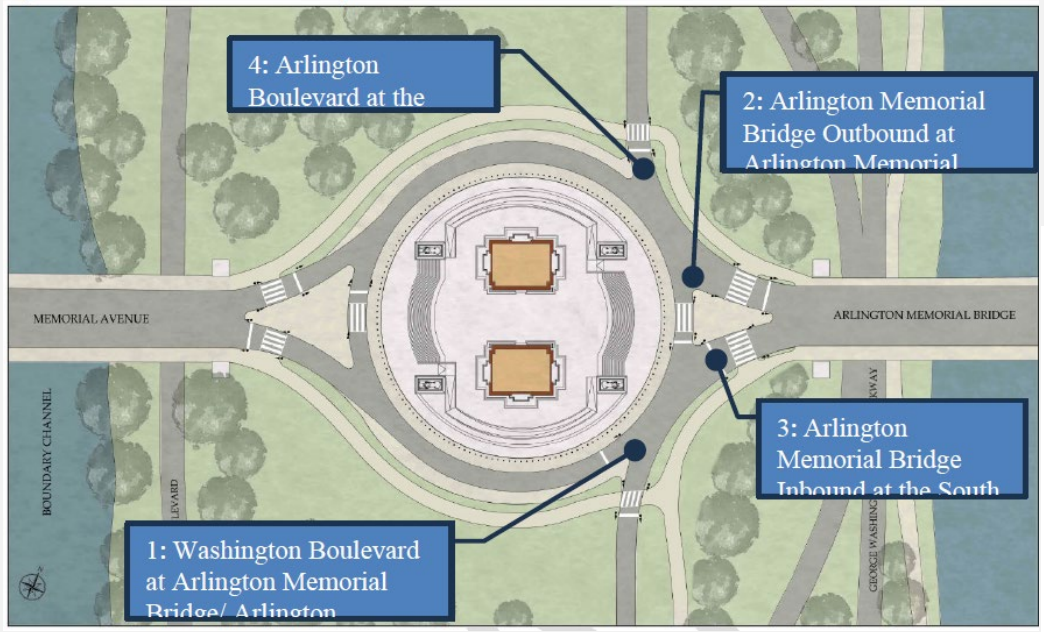
Proposed Transportation and Circulation



Traffic Signal Hardware Arrangement on Metal Poles

Proposed Transportation and Circulation

Figure 9: Intersection Reference Key for Level of Service Tables



AM Peak Hour Traffic simulation with proposed roadway changes and signalization.
Design of proposed Arch shown on the site is a prior version and not currently for review

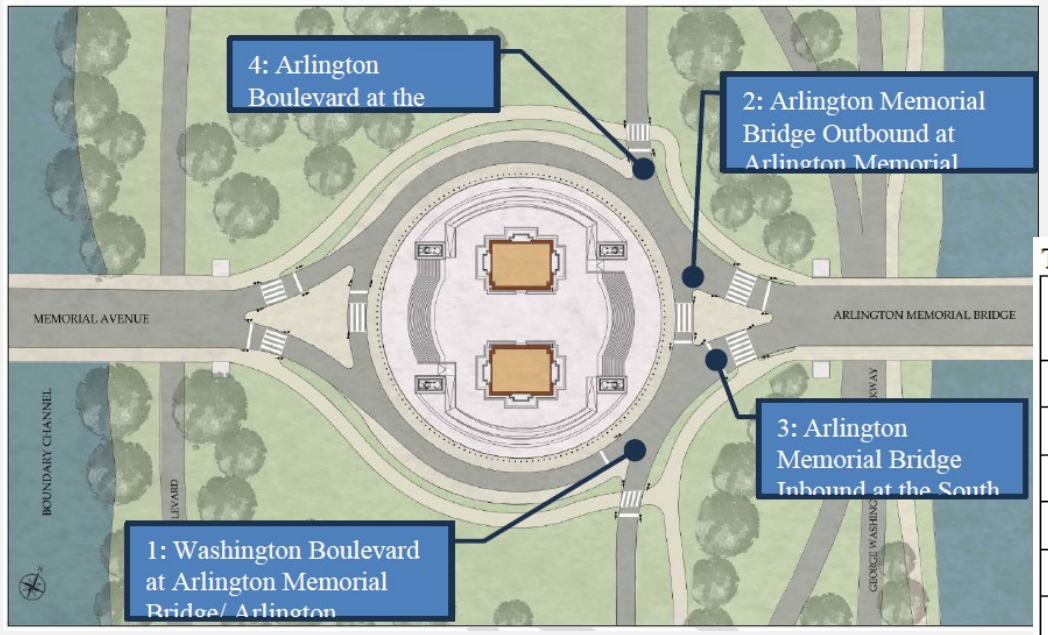
Table 4: Preliminary Signalization Traffic Operations Analysis, Weekday a.m. Peak Hour

Intersection	LOS	Delay (seconds)	Average Queue (feet)	95th Percentile Queue (feet)
1: Washington Blvd at AMC/AMB	**E**	**62.6**	-	-
AMC EB L/T	B	14.4	253	406
Washington Blvd NB R*	E	79.8	1,781	1,928
Washington Blvd NB R*	F	80.0	1,763	1,958
2: AMB Outbound at AMC	**A**	**8.4**	-	-
AMB WB T	A	4.7	37	85
AMB WB R	A	4.6	86	164
AMB WB R	A	6.2	95	173
AMC NB L/T	D	29.1	83	141
3: AMB Inbound at South Crosswalk	**A**	**4.1**	-	-
AMB EB T	A	1.9	54	87
AMB EB T	A	5.2	57	74
AMB EB T	A	4.6	59	73
4: Arlington Blvd at North Crosswalk	**A**	**3.5**	-	-
Arlington Blvd NB T	A	3.6	69	113
Arlington Blvd NB T	A	3.4	69	136

* 410 Denied Vehicles, this metric indicates that the queue length was long and vehicles were unable to enter the network during the simulation. An additional 173.8 seconds of delay was unaccounted for due to denied entry to the network.

Proposed Transportation and Circulation

Figure 9: Intersection Reference Key for Level of Service Tables



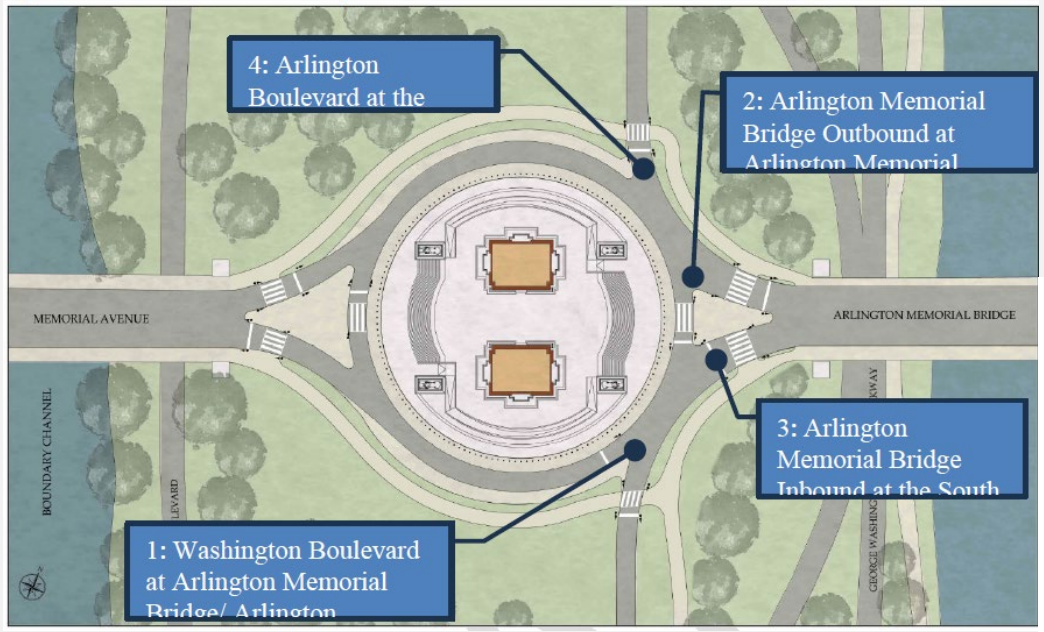
PM Peak Hour Traffic simulation with proposed roadway changes and signalization.
Design of proposed Arch shown on the site is a prior version and not currently for review

Table 5: Preliminary Signalization Traffic Operations Analysis, Weekday p.m. Peak Hour

Intersection	LOS	Delay (seconds)	Average Queue (feet)	95th Percentile Queue (feet)
1: Washington Blvd at AMC/AMB	**B**	**15.1**	-	-
AMC EB L/T	C	21.6	341	653
Washington Blvd NB R	B	12.1	128	272
Washington Blvd NB R	A	10.2	176	269
2: AMB Outbound at AMC	**A**	**13.2**	-	-
AMB WB T	A	6.7	40	86
AMB WB R	A	8.2	112	191
AMB WB R	A	9.0	133	216
AMC NB L/T	D	41.3	116	204
3: AMB Inbound at South Crosswalk	**A**	**3.6**	-	-
AMB EB T	A	2.7	68	123
AMB EB T	A	4.4	27	64
AMB EB T	A	3.8	40	73
4: Arlington Blvd at North Crosswalk	**A**	**5.1**	-	-
Arlington Blvd NB T	A	5.4	83	143
Arlington Blvd NB T	A	4.9	84	147

Proposed Transportation and Circulation

Figure 9: Intersection Reference Key for Level of Service Tables

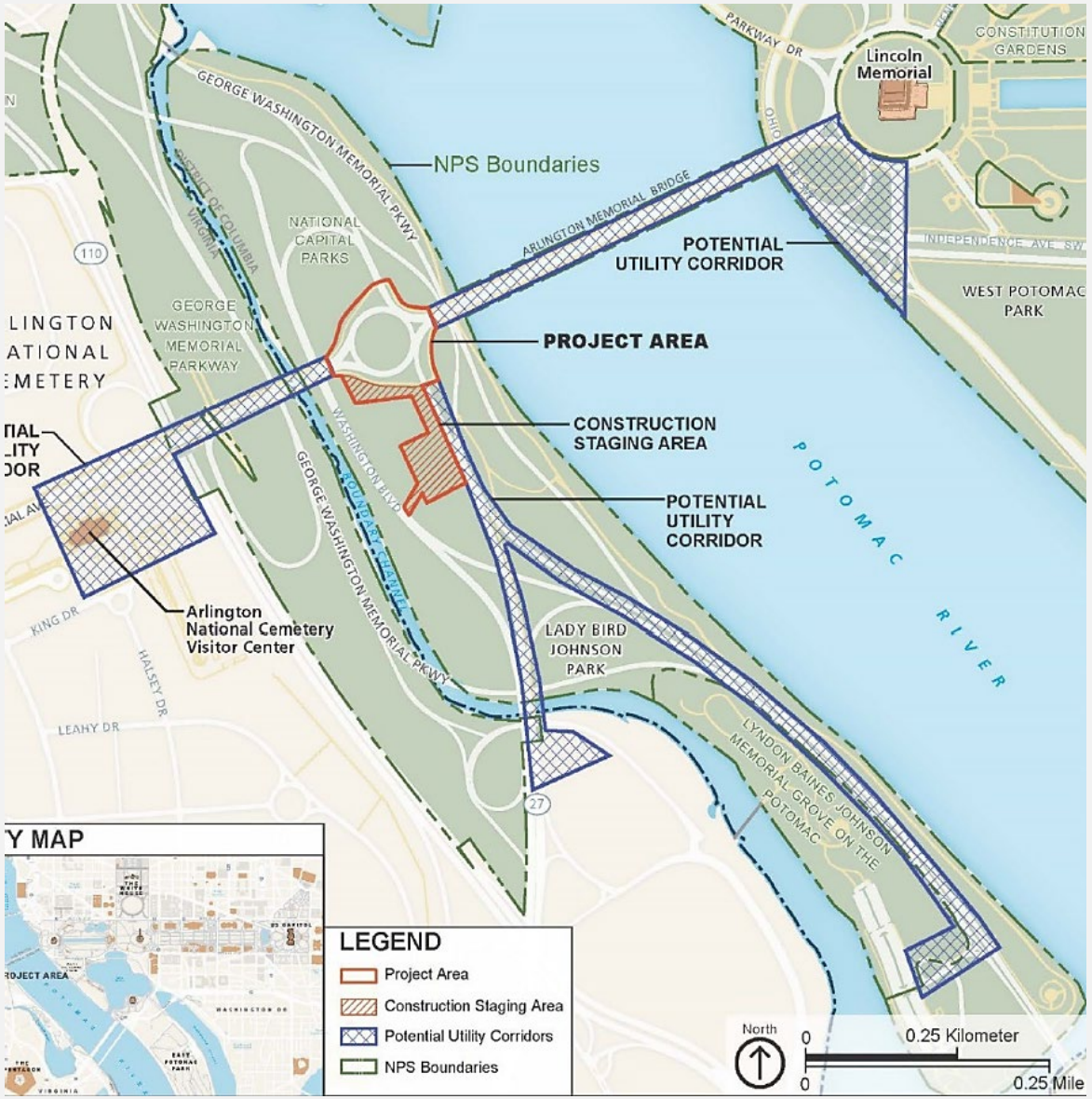


Saturday Midday Peak Hour Traffic simulation with proposed roadway changes and signalization. Design of proposed Arch shown on the site is a prior version and not currently for review

Table 6: Preliminary Signalization Traffic Operations Analysis, Saturday Midday Peak Hour

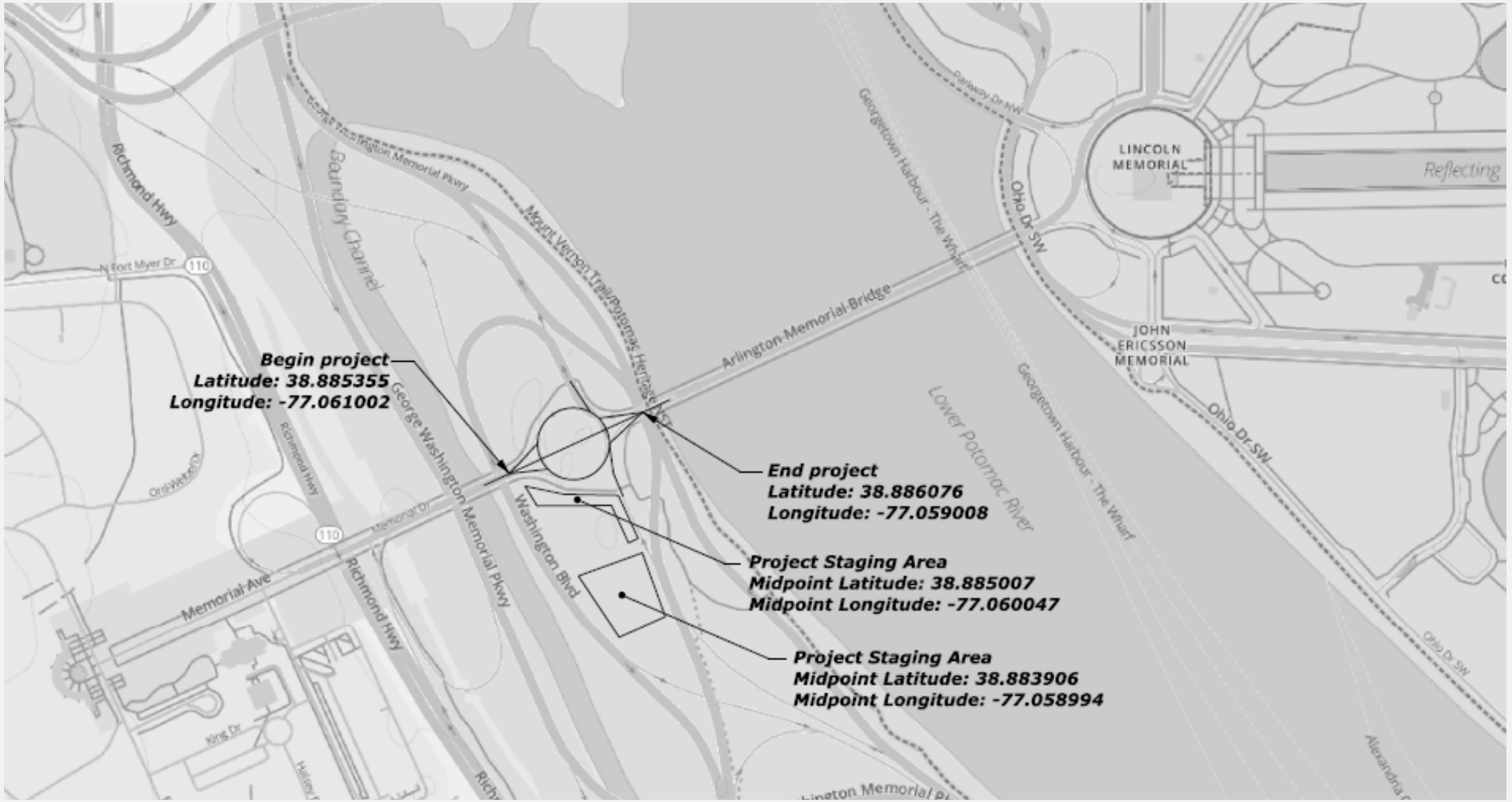
Intersection	LOS	Delay (seconds)	Average Queue (feet)	95th Percentile Queue (feet)
1: Washington Blvd at AMC/AMB	**B**	**10.3**	-	-
AMC EB L/T	B	12.3	181	322
Washington Blvd NB R	B	10.5	82	230
Washington Blvd NB R	A	8.4	137	239
2: AMB Outbound at AMC	**B**	**10.6**	-	-
AMB WB T	A	5.9	32	73
AMB WB R	A	7.5	145	240
AMB WB R	A	8.3	164	253
AMC NB L/T	D	36.3	94	169
3: AMB Inbound at South Crosswalk	**A**	**3.4**	-	-
AMB EB T	A	1.8	32	75
AMB EB T	A	4.4	23	58
AMB EB T	A	3.7	27	65
4: Arlington Blvd at North Crosswalk	**A**	**3.8**	-	-
Arlington Blvd NB T	A	4.1	84	136
Arlington Blvd NB T	A	3.5	84	132

Proposed Construction Staging and Laydown

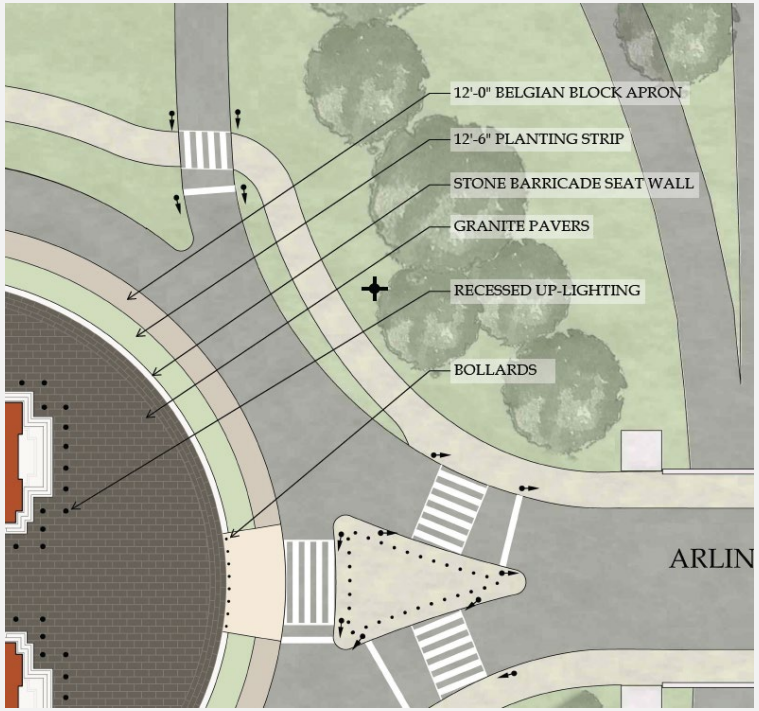


Construction access would primarily use I-395 via Route 27, with US 50 as a secondary route. The current construction planning materials indicate approximately 1,400 truckloads of soil export and approximately 400 truckloads of engineered fill import over the life of the project. A staging footprint immediately south of the circle and additional parking/staging space would support equipment, contractor trailers, generators, fuel and water storage, and material laydown.

Proposed Construction Staging and Laydown

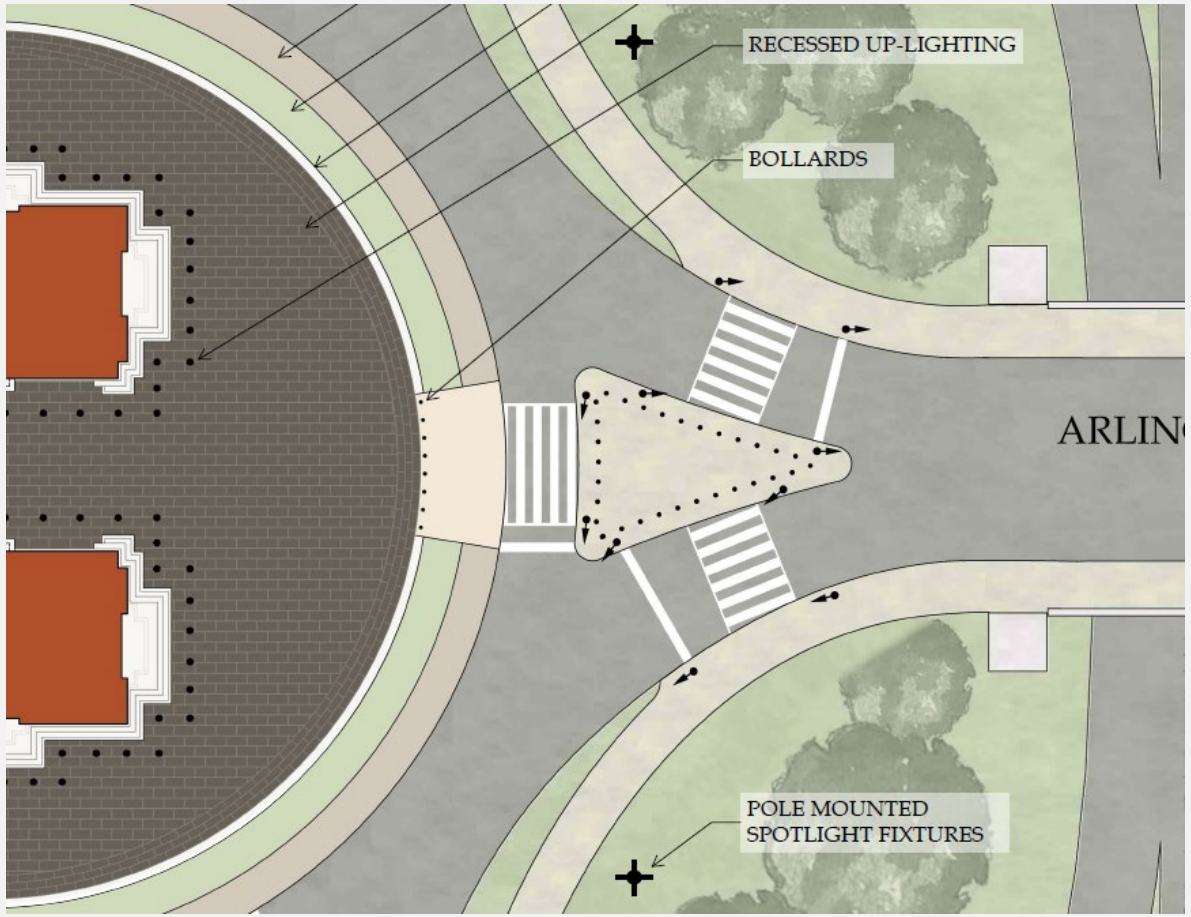


Proposed Perimeter Security



The plaza and interior facility would be operated as a controlled-access federal site. Authorized vehicle access would be managed by barricade walls and removable or retractable bollards. Visitors would queue between the Arch legs and enter a screening area equipped with walk-through magnetometers, x-ray machines, and explosive trace detection equipment. The site would include concentric layers of security through perimeter barriers, lighting, exterior and interior surveillance, access control on major and critical-path doors, and active patrol. The current operating concept assumes security screening is a key throughput constraint and would govern visitor access into the building.

Proposed Lighting



The Arch would be illuminated using a low spill, fully shielded lighting system designed to highlight the Arch. In addition, aviation-required safety lighting would be incorporated into the design using the least intrusive technology available, ensuring compliance with aircraft visibility requirements while limiting unnecessary light emission.

The Arch will be brilliantly illuminated at night, similar to other monuments and government edifices on the National Mall. Uplighting recessed into the ground at the plaza level and protected by transparent covers will light all major aspects of the Arch. Additionally, smaller uplights above the impost base, entablature, and attic story will light the upper registers and center vaulting of the Arch, to prevent any unsightly shadow lines that may be cast from the ground level uplighting. Directional lighting discretely mounted around the perimeter of the observation deck will light the surmounting statues from multiple angles. The high volume of lumens on the arch surface will create a glow that ensures even levels of ground lighting within the arch plaza. Illumination of the Arch would be supplemented by eight light stanchions, ranging from 14 to 20 feet in height, strategically located around the intersection.

Proposed Lighting

Existing lighting condition looking east

Proposed Lighting

Proposed lighting condition looking east

Proposed Lighting

Existing lighting condition looking west

Proposed Lighting

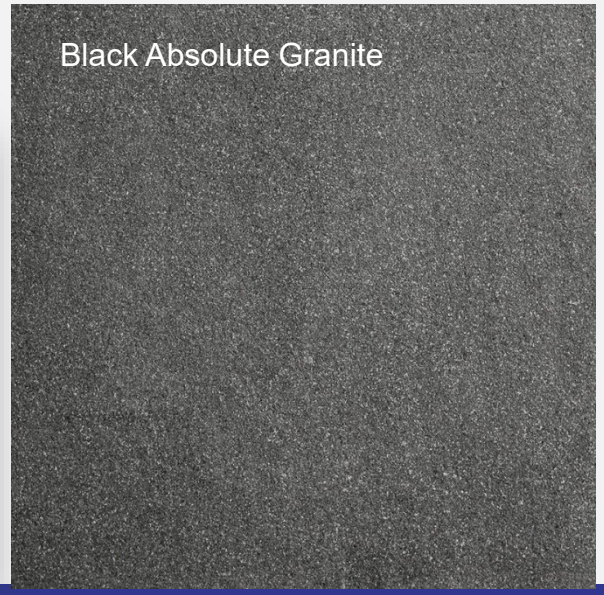
Proposed lighting condition looking west

Proposed Materials

Exterior Cladding Options

The Arch would be built from concrete and finished with granite. The granite used for the Arch would be sourced from one of three quarries, located in Vermont, North Carolina, or California—depending on availability and desired color.

Exterior Paving



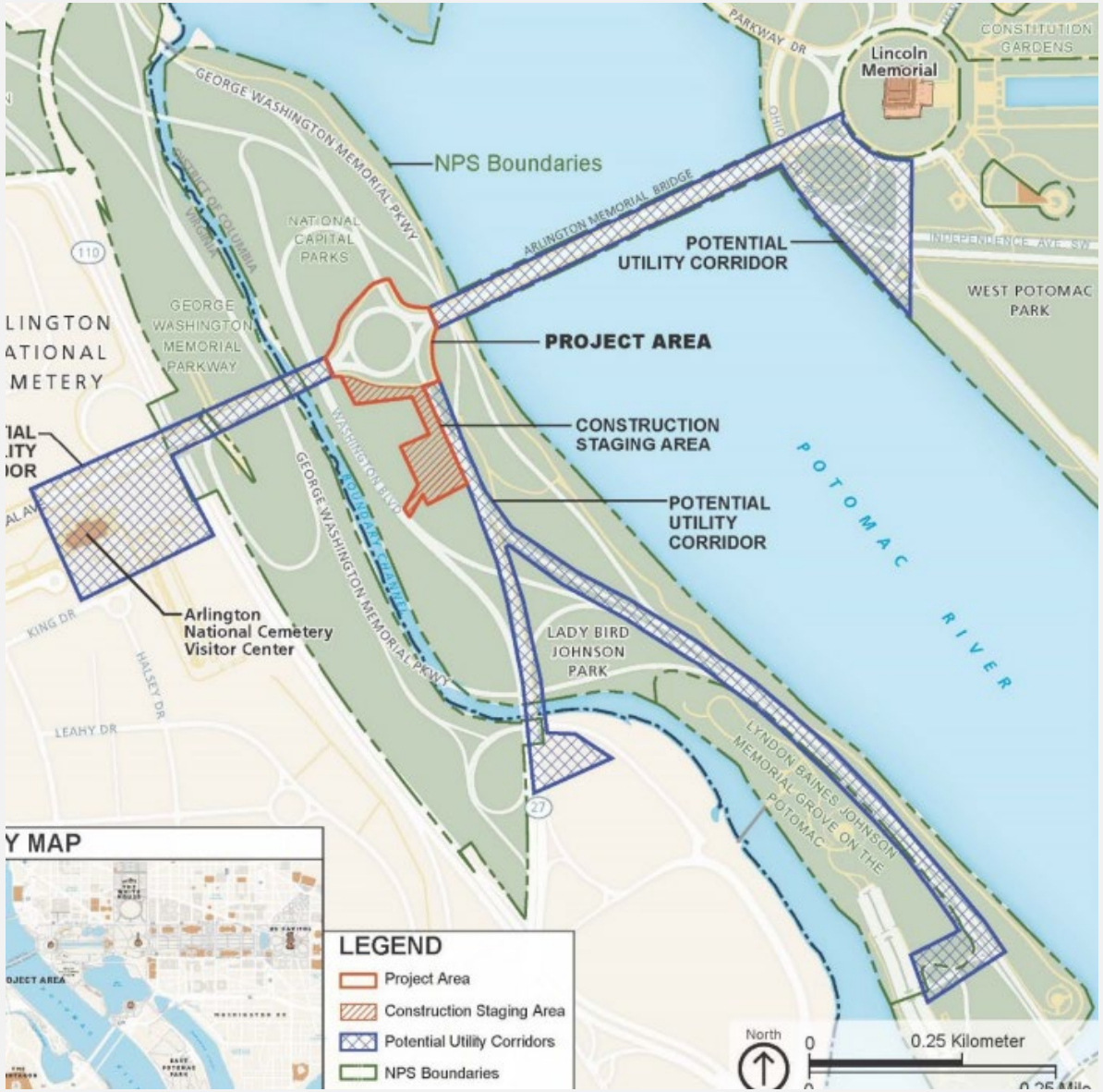
Statuary and Exterior Doors

Bronze

Antique Bronze

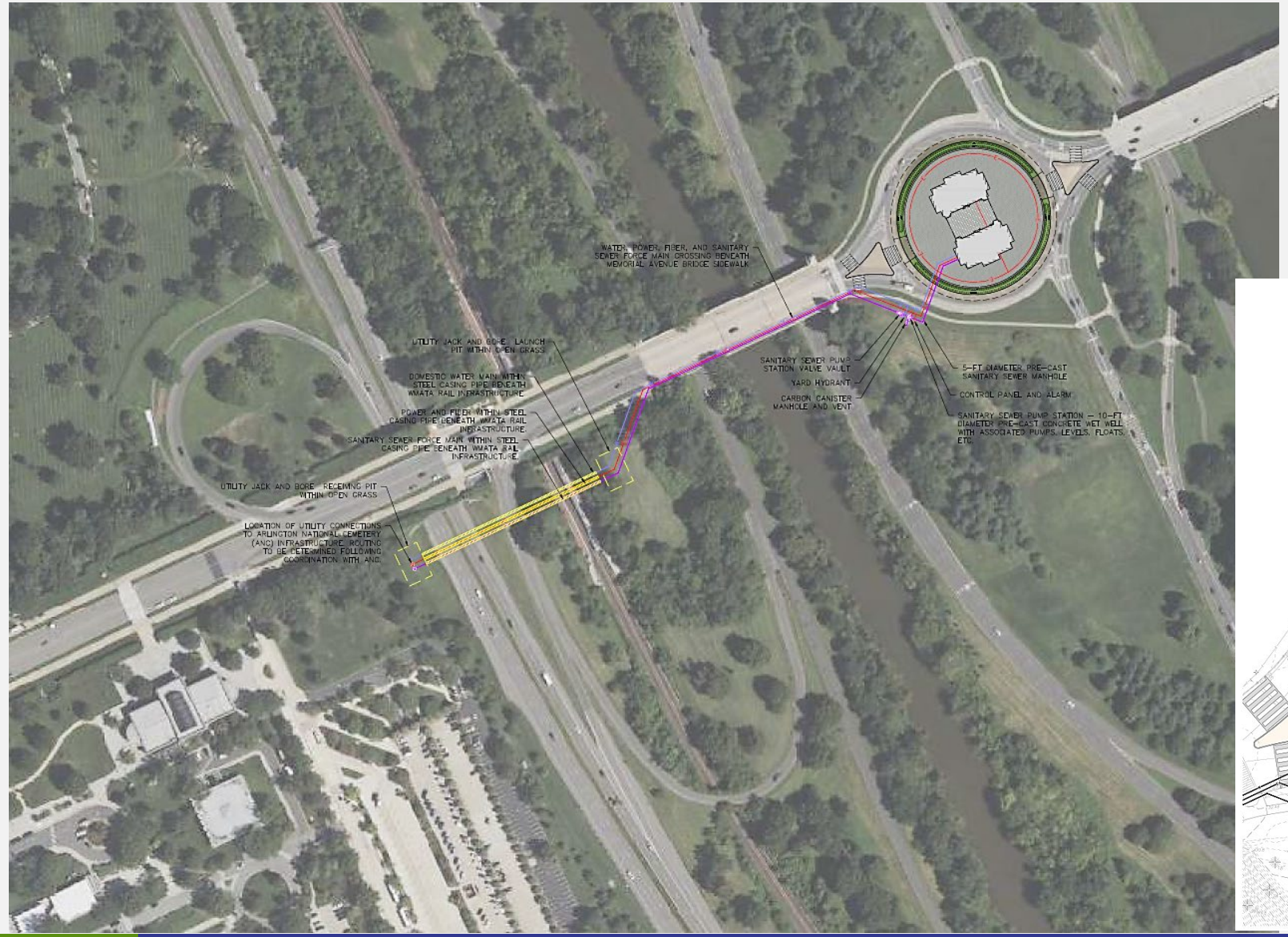
Gold

Proposed Utilities and Infrastructure

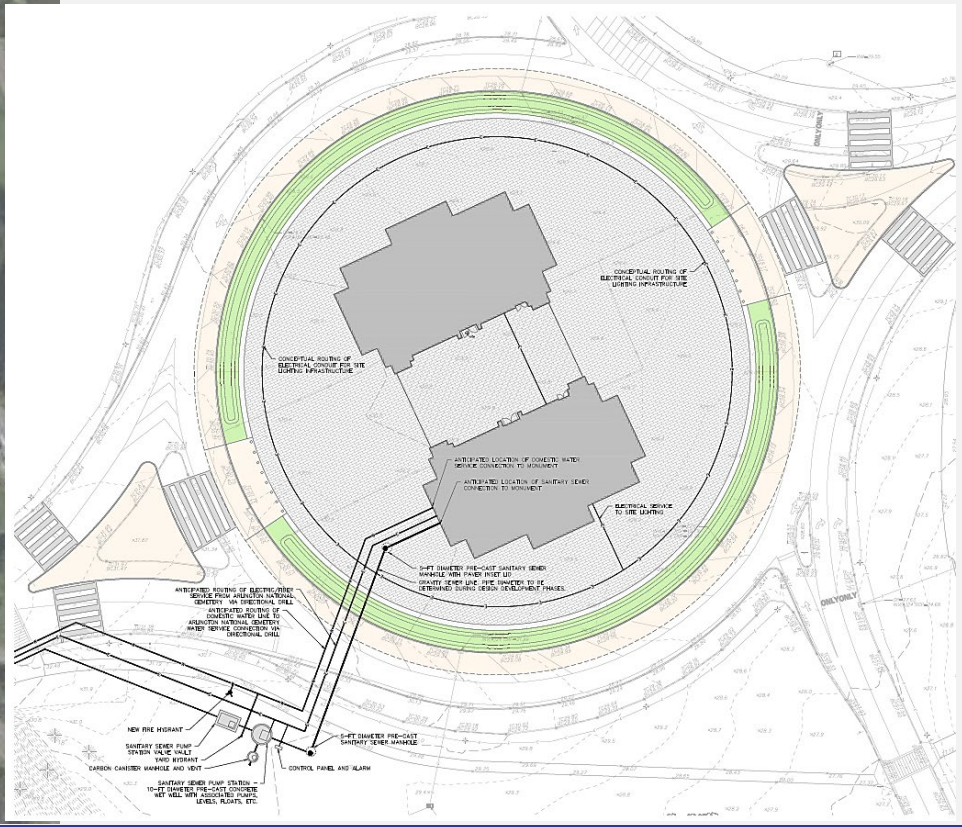


The project would require installation of new utility and supporting civil infrastructure to serve the Arch and associated visitor facilities. Because Memorial Circle does not currently contain the utility systems necessary to support a large occupiable structure and public restroom functions, the project would introduce new potable water, sanitary sewer, electric, gas, and telecommunications service to the site through one or more utility corridors linking Columbia Island to existing infrastructure in Virginia and, potentially, across Arlington Memorial Bridge. The current concept is to route utilities along existing transportation or bridge corridors where feasible in order to consolidate impacts and reduce the extent of new ground disturbance.

Proposed Utilities and Infrastructure

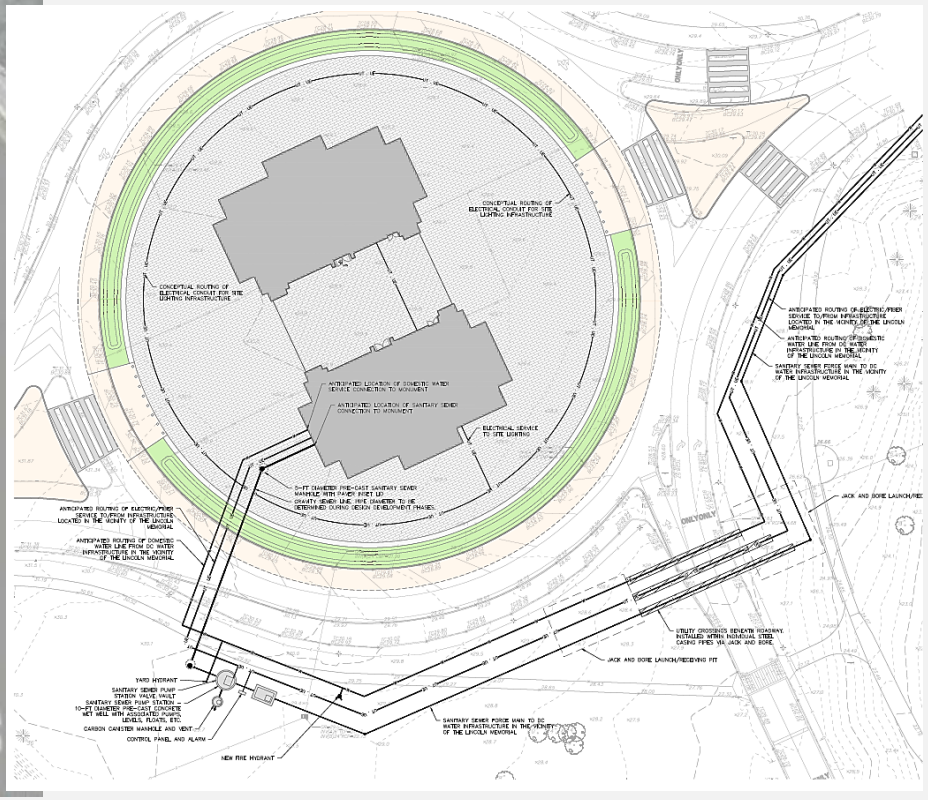


Proposed utility plan – Option 1

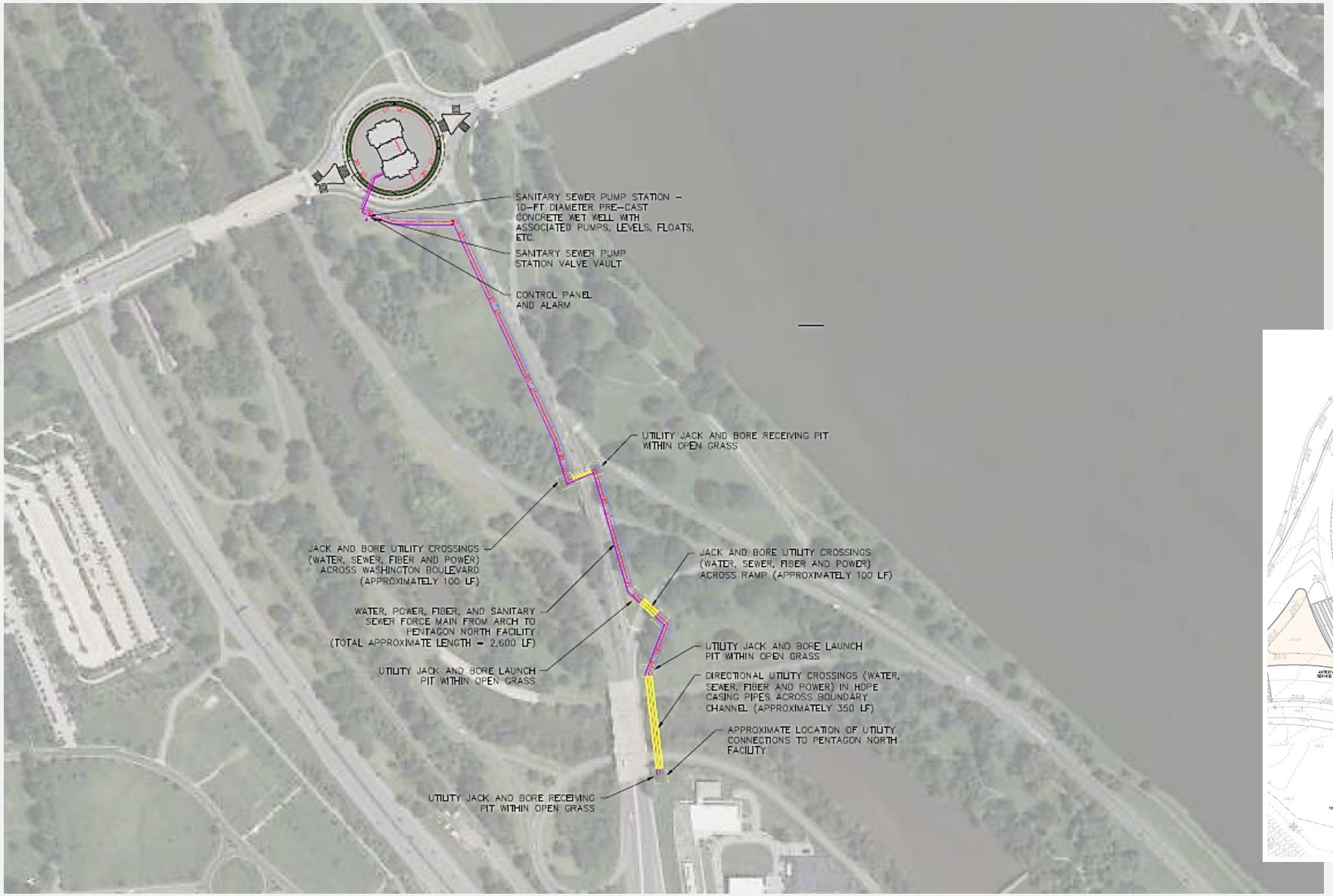


Proposed Utilities and Infrastructure

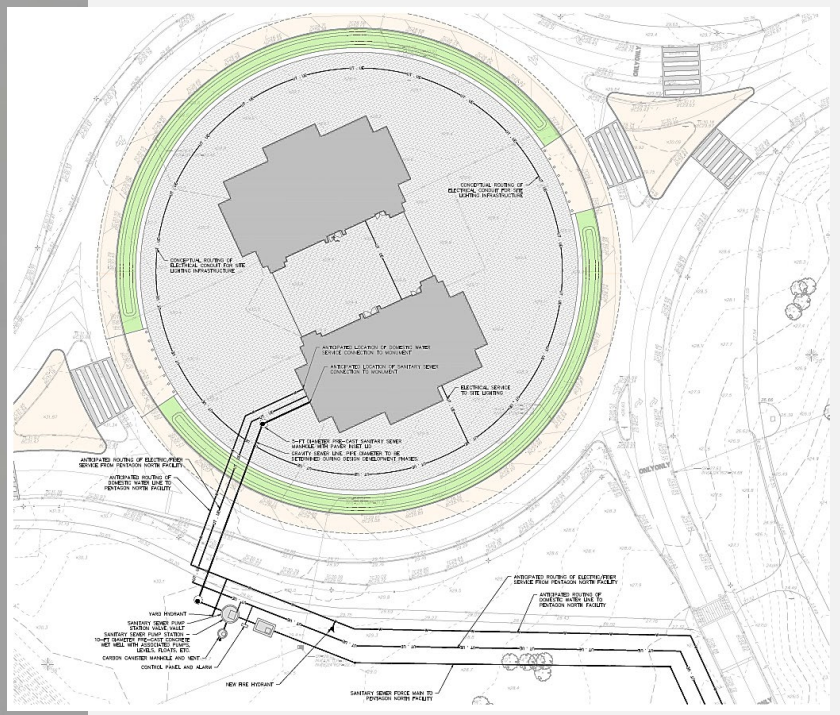
Proposed utility plan – Option 2



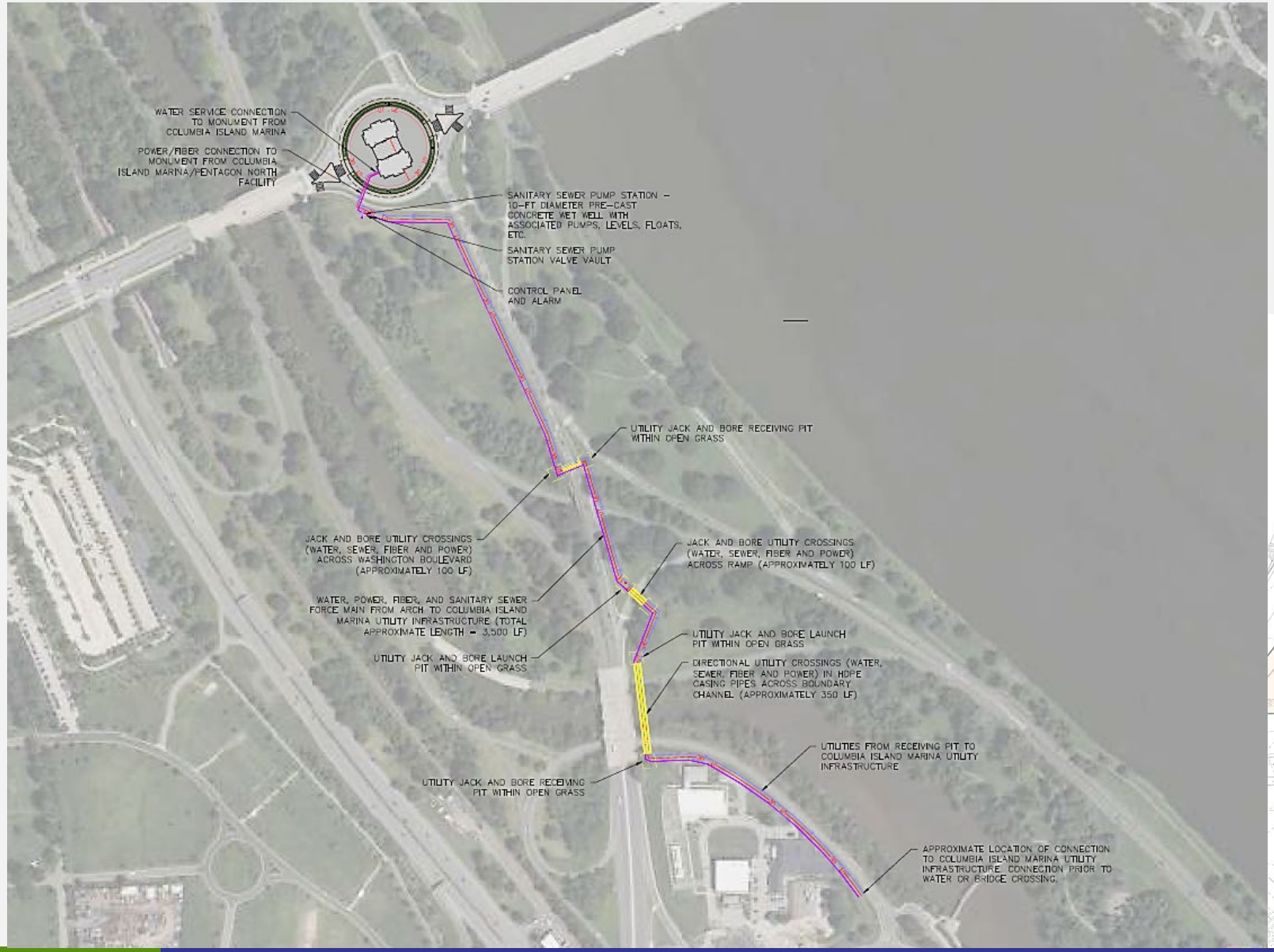
Proposed Utilities and Infrastructure



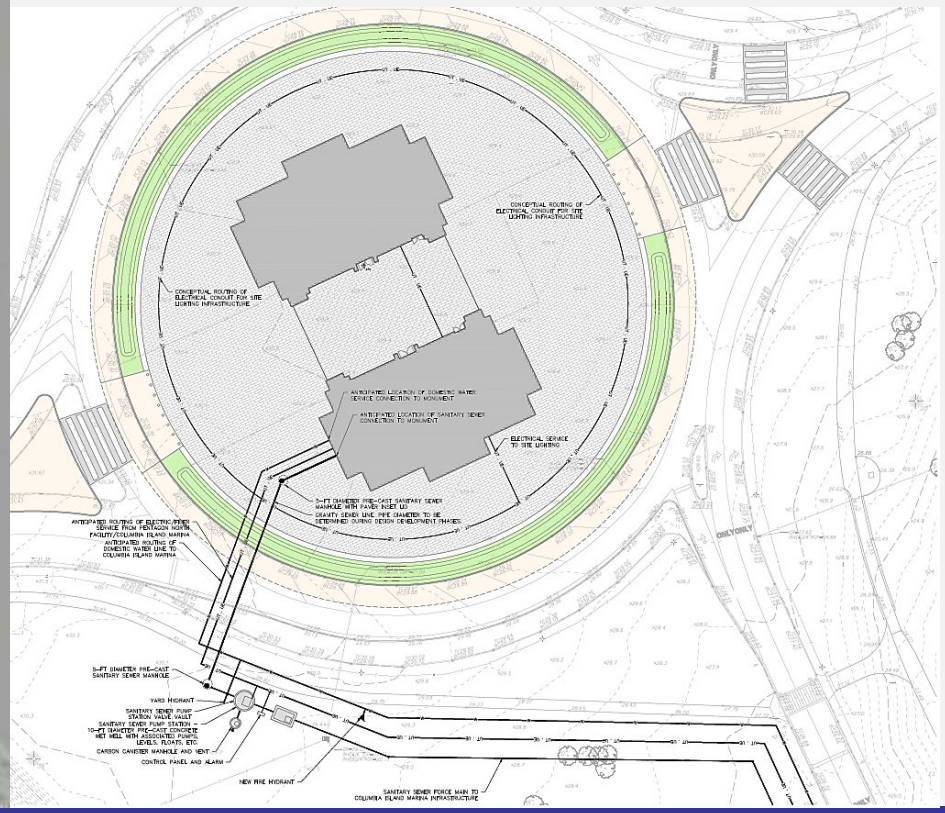
Proposed utility plan – Option 3



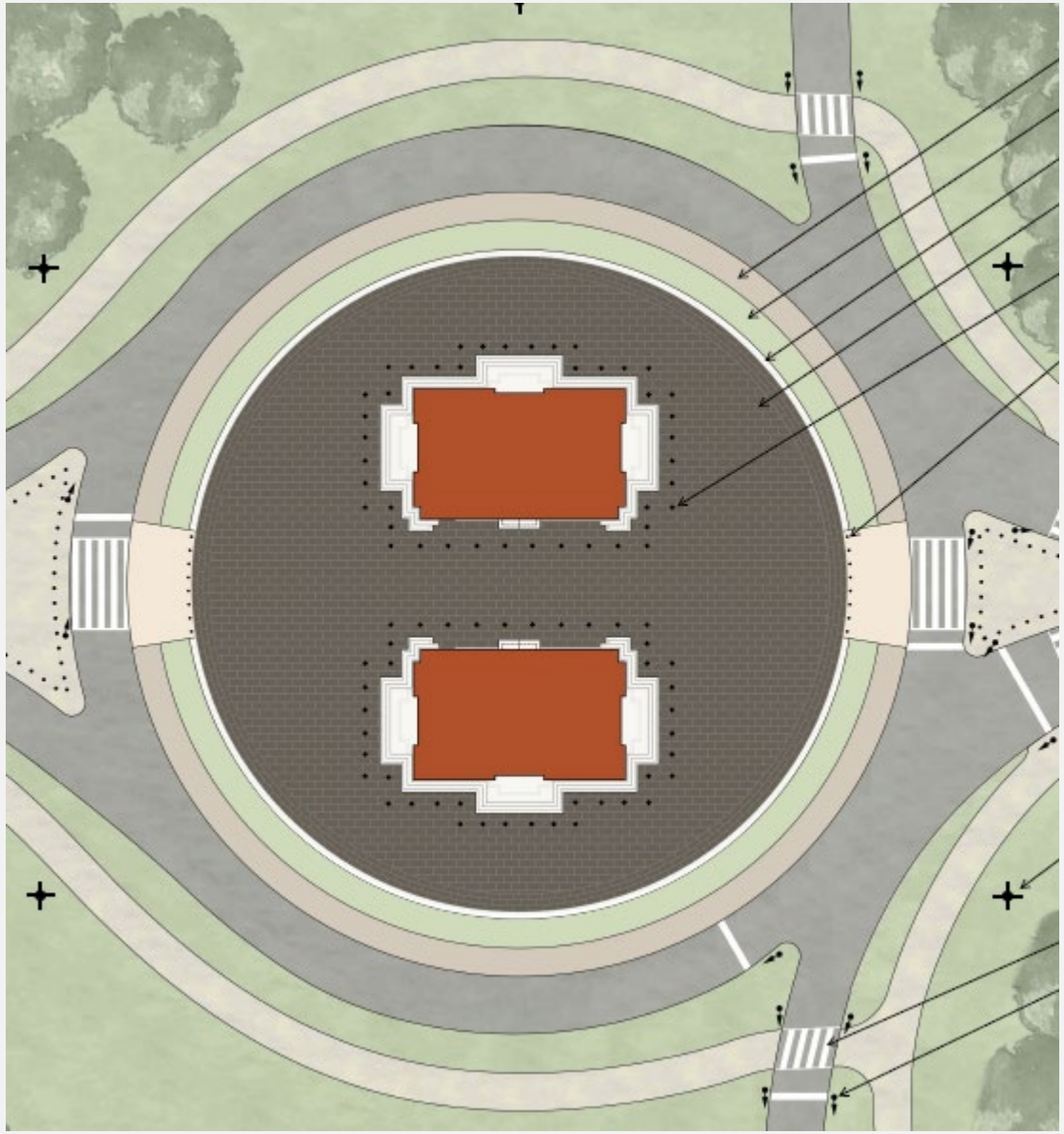
Proposed Utilities and Infrastructure



Proposed utility plan – Option 4



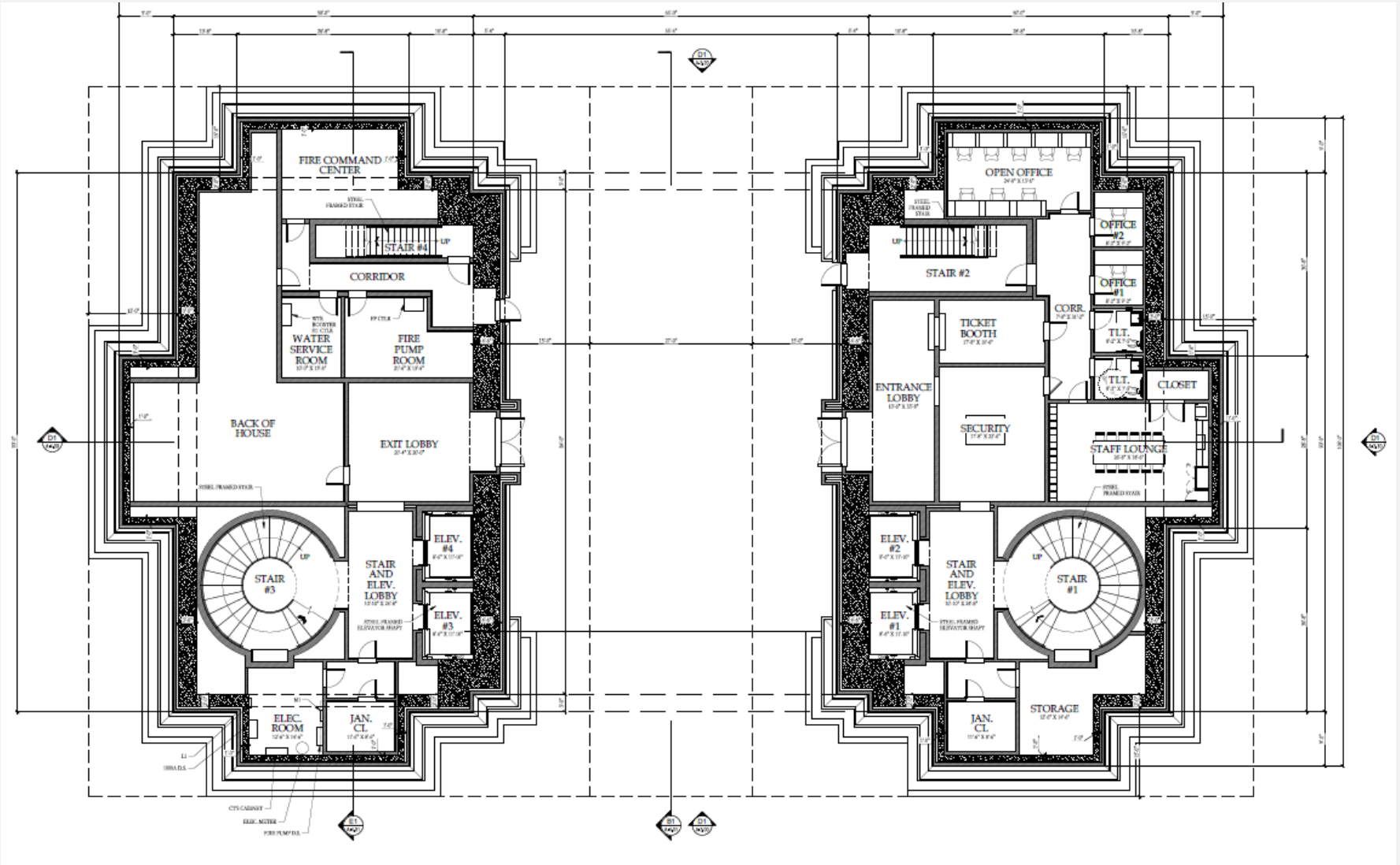
Proposed Visitor Access and Experience



Visitor access would be shaped primarily by security screening and controlled circulation rather than by unrestricted public entry. The current operational assumption is that approximately 20 visitors would be screened every 15 minutes, making screening the principal throughput constraint for the interior visitor experience. Timed-entry tickets would therefore be used to regulate arrivals and reduce congestion, similar to operations at the Washington Monument. After screening, visitors would enter the public portion of the Arch and proceed by stair or elevator to the mezzanine and observation levels, where visitor services could include exhibit space, restrooms, and potentially a café and gift shop. This operating model would create a structured, capacity-managed visitor experience rather than a free-flow public memorial condition.

Visitors would reach the Arch through a controlled pedestrian circulation system centered on the Memorial Avenue axis, with two-stage crossings from surrounding sidewalks to intermediate refuge areas and then into the center of Memorial Circle. New signals, crosswalks, curb islands, and related pedestrian safety features would be used to support this access pattern.

Proposed Visitor Access and Experience



Under the current operating concept, the exterior plaza surrounding the Arch would remain publicly accessible, while access to the interior of the structure would occur during defined visitor hours and would be regulated through a timed-entry system. Visitors would enter through the south leg of the Arch, queue between the two columns, proceed through a security screening area, and then move through the public portions of the structure by stairs or elevator. The public program would include screening and circulation space at the ground level, exhibit and support functions at the mezzanine or gallery level, and access to the observation deck above.

Proposed Visitor Access and Experience

East view from the future observation deck

Proposed Visitor Access and Experience

West view from the future observation deck

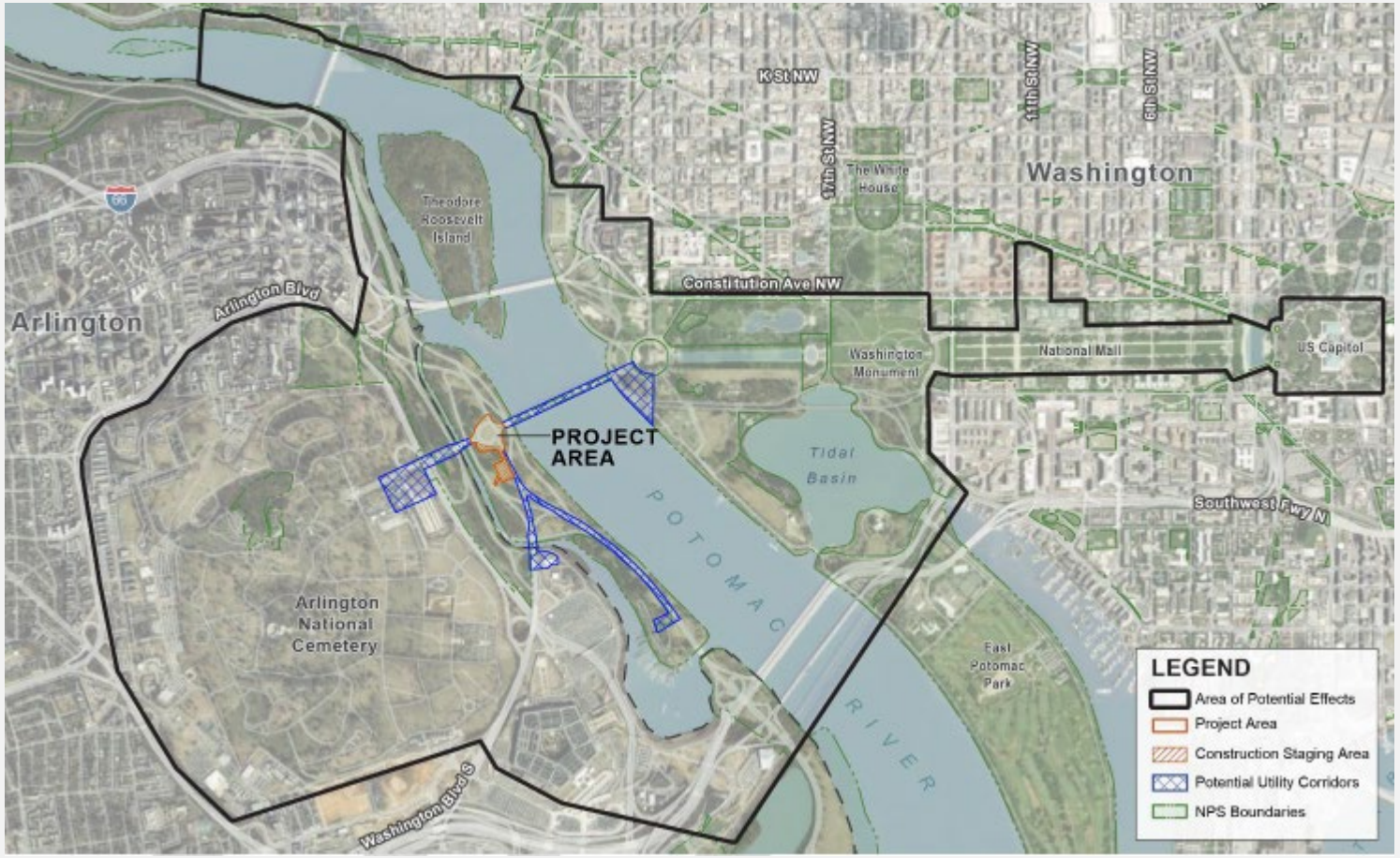
Proposed Visitor Access and Experience

North view from the future observation deck

Proposed Visitor Access and Experience

South view from the future observation deck

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm



The project would affect several historically significant public realm conditions and viewsheds that contribute to the ceremonial and commemorative character of Memorial Circle, the Memorial Avenue Corridor, Arlington Memorial Bridge, and the broader monumental core. The most important affected viewshed is the primary east-west axial relationship between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington House. The proposed Arch would introduce a new permanent vertical element within Memorial Circle.

The Arch would affect broader views toward Memorial Circle from surrounding areas, including Parkway Drive and adjacent portions of Lady Bird Johnson Park, where the Arch would become a new vertical element within a landscape presently defined by roadway geometry, open space, bridge-related features, and vegetation. These changes would potentially alter the historic setting and visual character of the parkway corridor and its associated cultural landscapes.

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from Arlington House at Arlington National Cemetery looking east without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from Arlington House at Arlington National Cemetery looking east with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from Memorial Avenue looking east without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from Memorial Avenue looking east with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from Memorial Avenue looking east without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from Memorial Avenue looking east with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Arlington Memorial Bridge looking west without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Arlington Memorial Bridge looking west with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Potomac River looking west without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Potomac River looking west with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the George Washington Memorial Parkway looking south without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the George Washington Memorial Parkway looking south with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Lincoln Memorial looking west without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Lincoln Memorial looking west with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Lincoln Memorial looking west without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Lincoln Memorial looking west with the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Jefferson Memorial looking north without the Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from the Jefferson Memorial looking north with the Arch

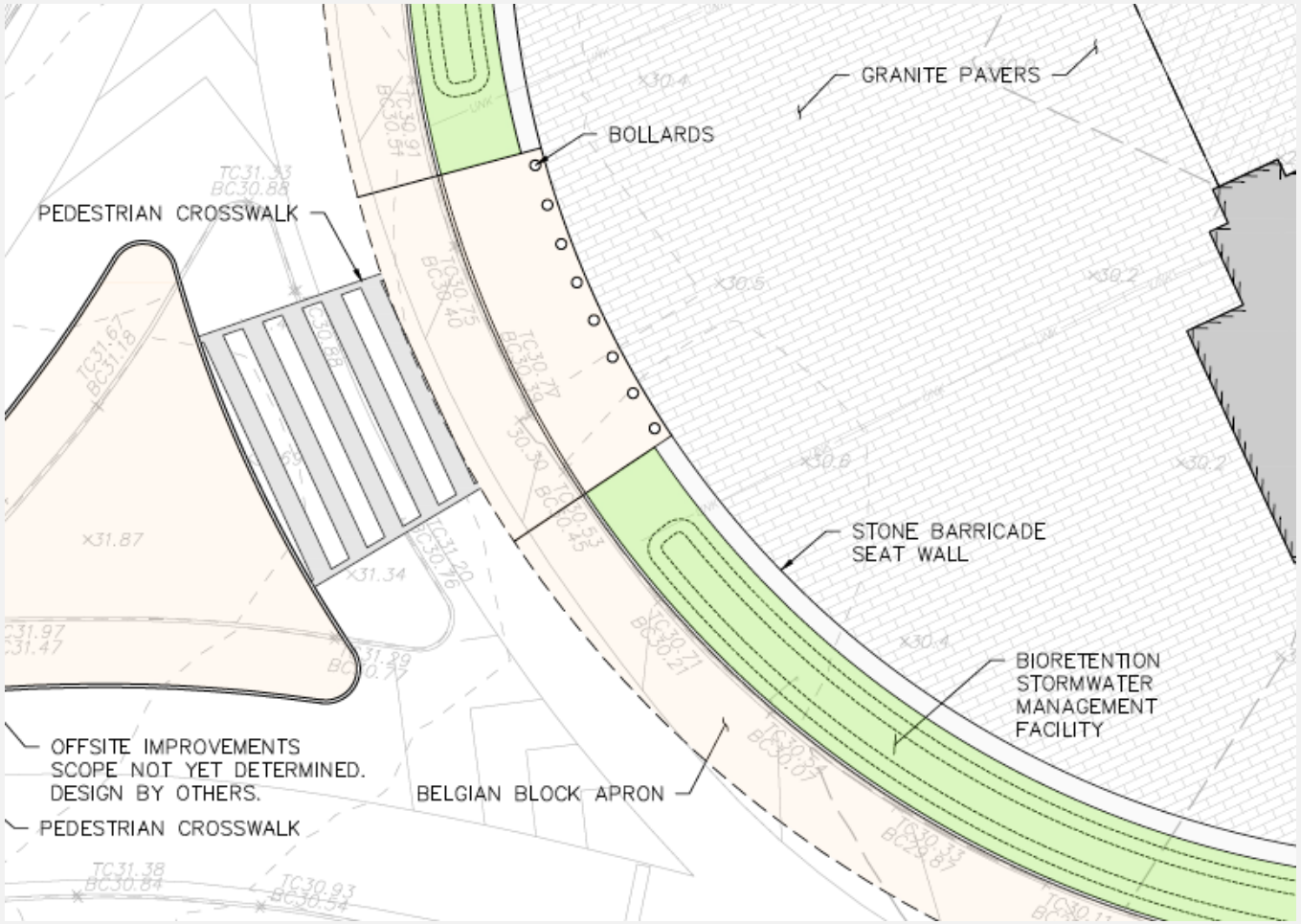
Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

View from US Capitol looking west without Arch

Proposed Viewsheds and Public Realm

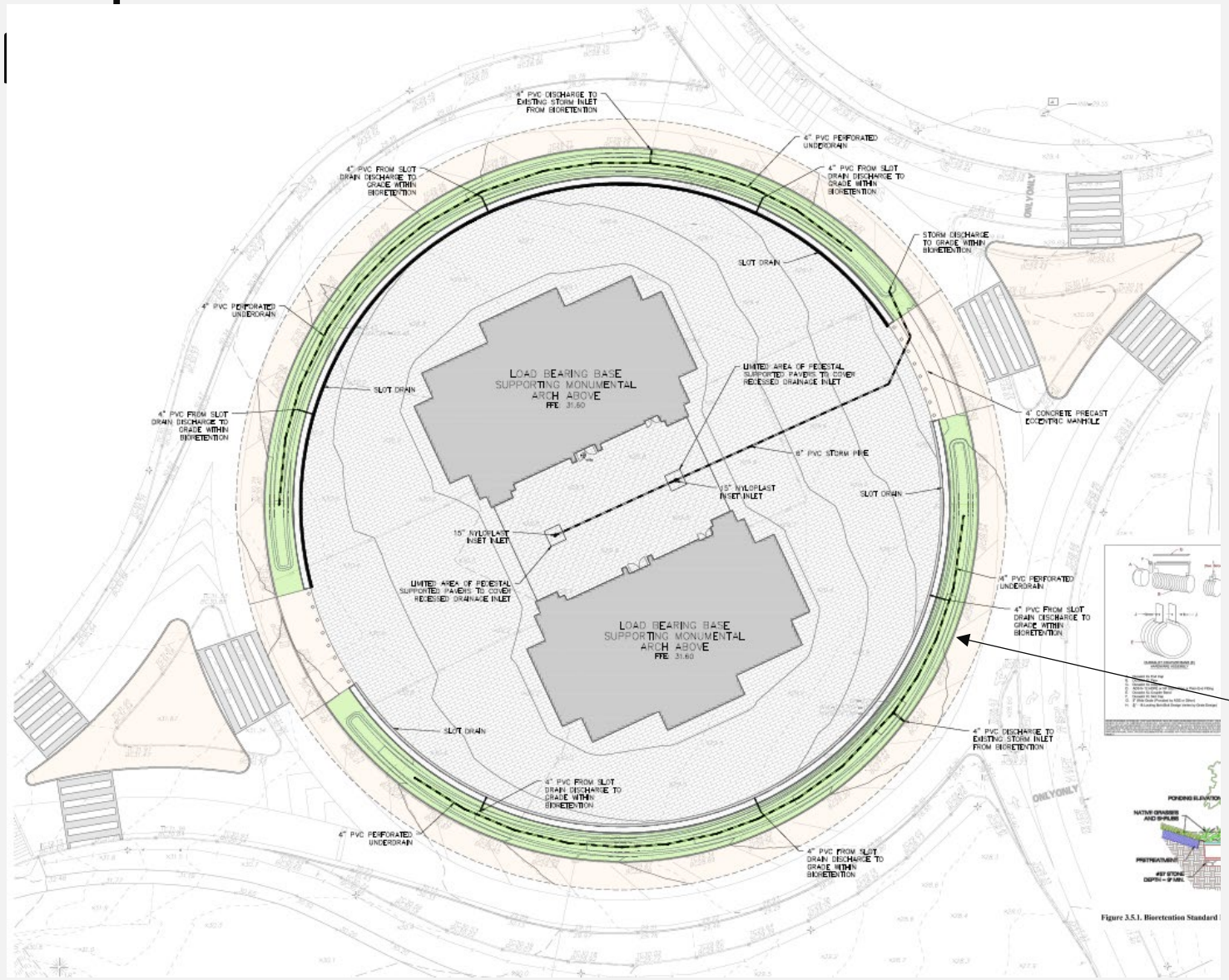
View from US Capitol looking west with Arch

Proposed Water Resources and Stormwater Management



The project would add approximately 62,875 square feet of new impervious surface and require approximately 6,300 cubic feet of on-site stormwater retention. The current stormwater concept relies on perimeter bioretention or rain gardens within the landscaped portions of the circle and surrounding area. Potable water, sanitary sewer, electric, gas, and telecommunications service would be extended to the site from one or more utility corridors, with alternatives including bridge-mounted, directional-bore, or roadway-based installation methods. Groundwater is present at roughly 14 to 16 feet below grade, and minimal dewatering is currently anticipated compared with the overall excavation and foundation work.

Proposed Water Resources and Stormwater



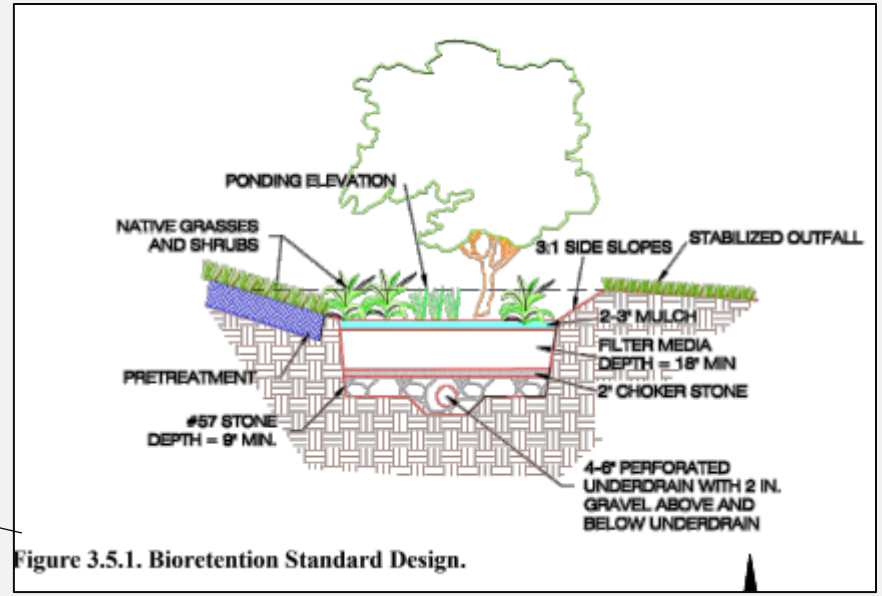
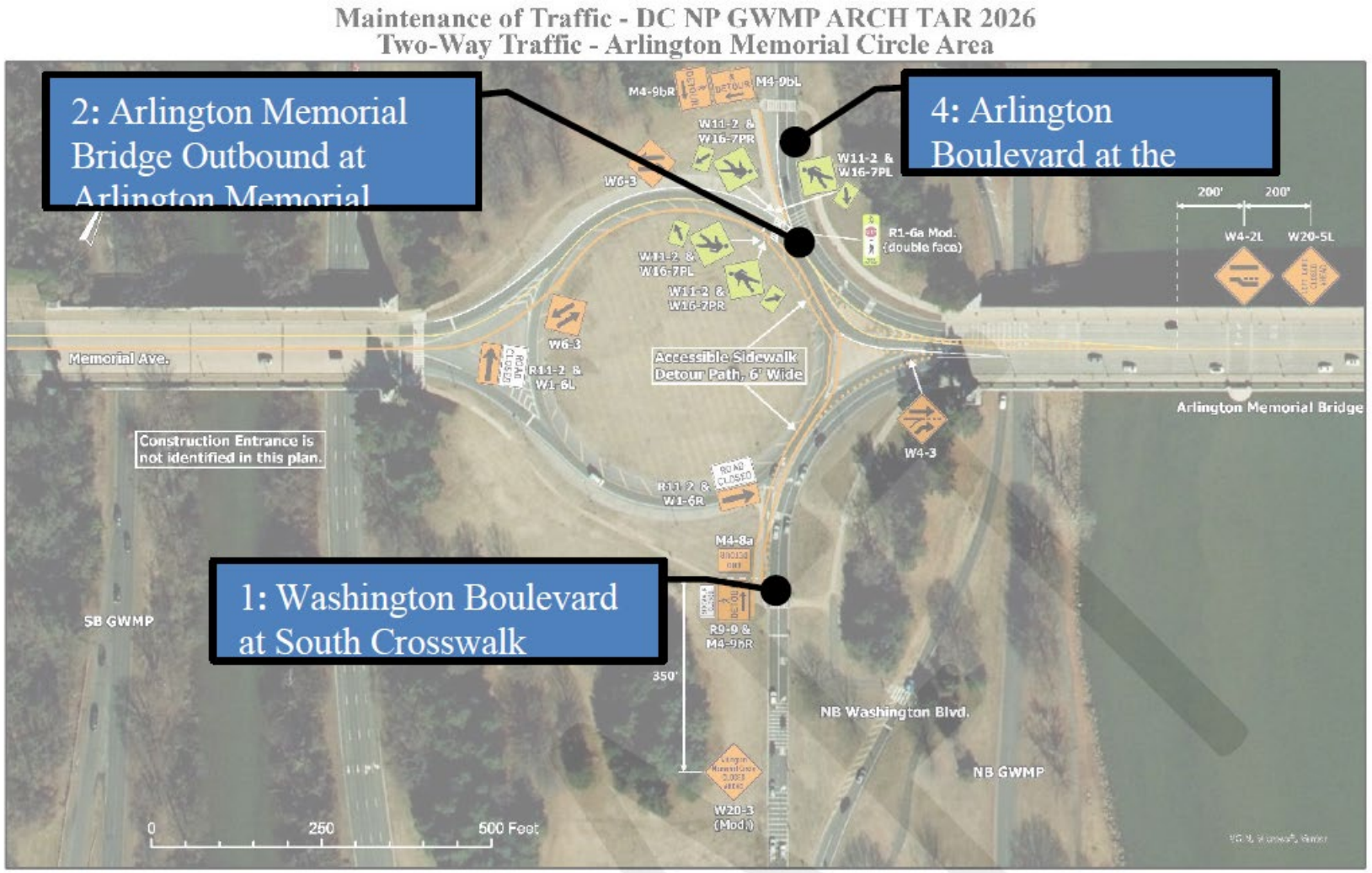


Figure 3.5.1. Bioretention Standard Design.

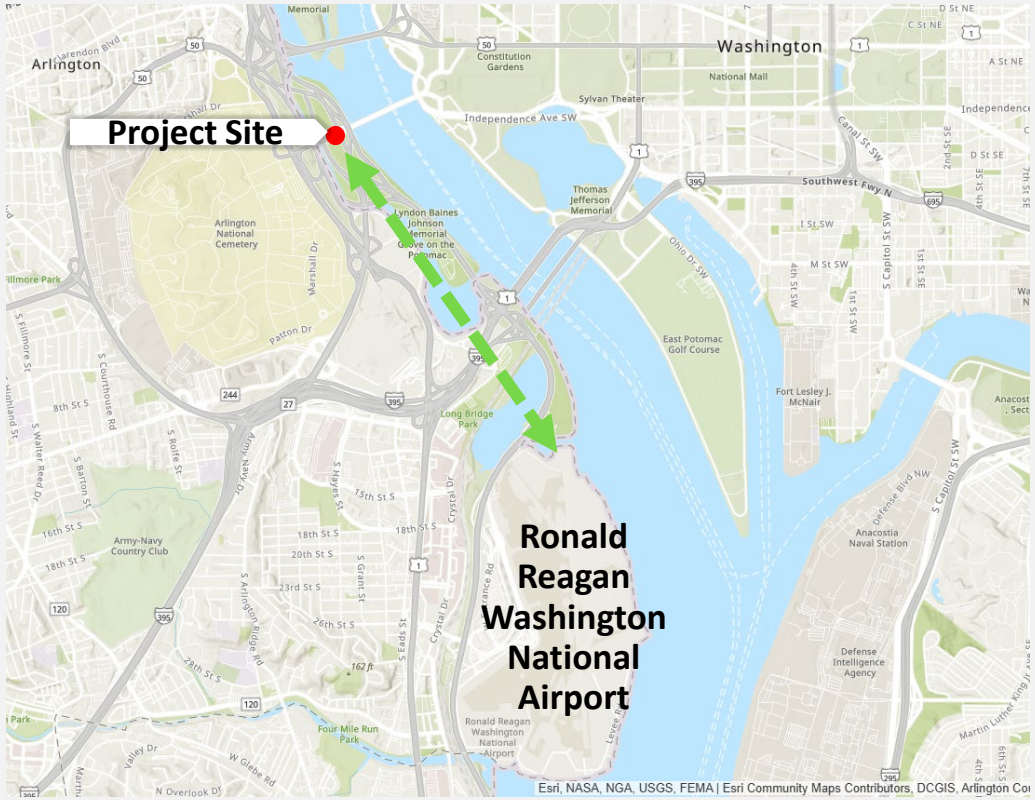
Proposed Construction Effects

Figure 10: Maintenance of Traffic Plan and Intersection Reference Key for Level of Service Tables



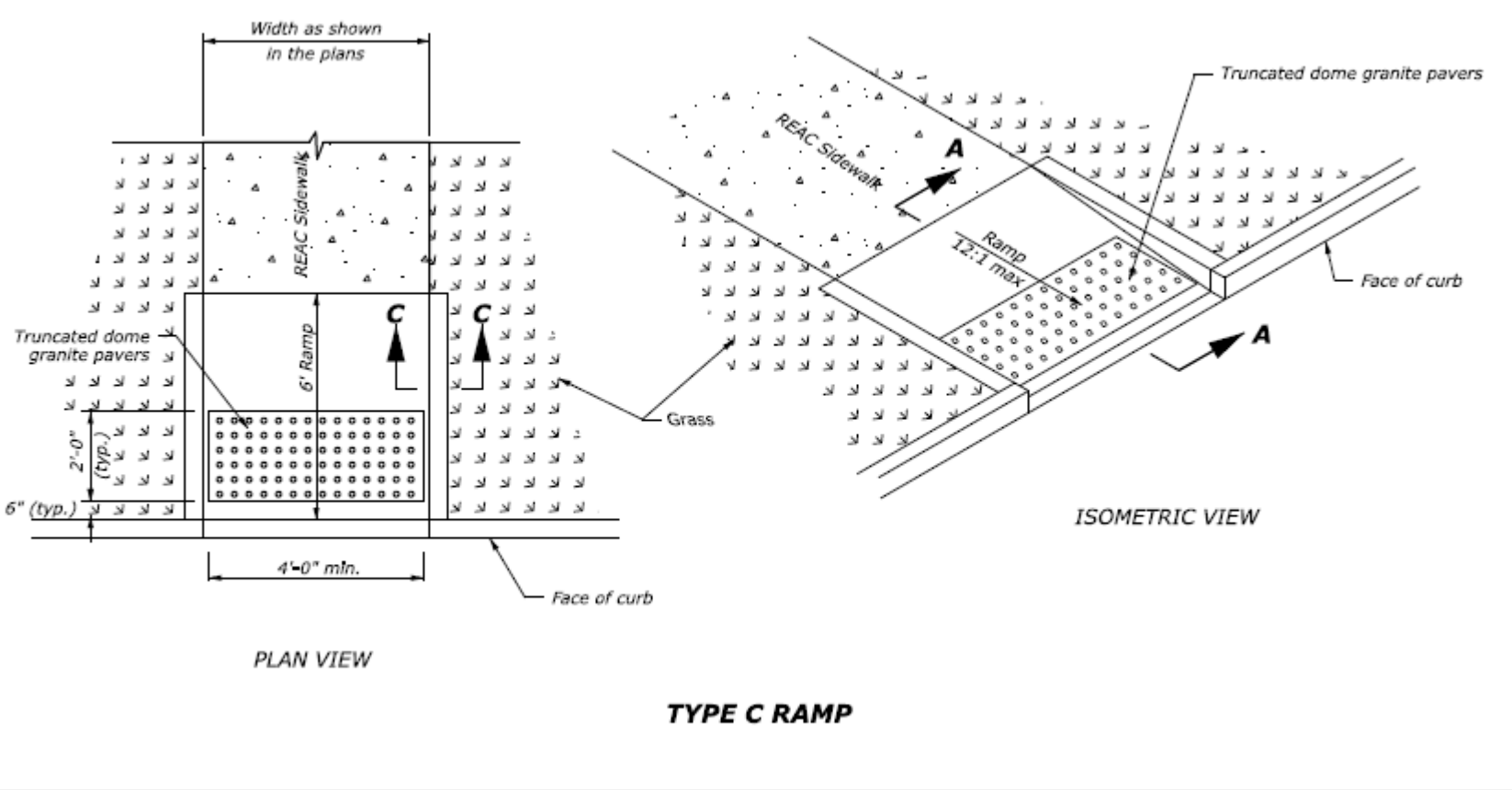
Construction would occur in multiple phases over roughly two to three years and would require extensive staging, excavation, deep foundations, crane operations, utility installation, soil export and fill import, temporary traffic control, and temporary pedestrian detours. Construction work would involve substantial equipment, including tower cranes, drill rigs, forklifts, skid steers, concrete pumps, and large haul trucks. Work would continue year-round work with and long daily work windows.

FAA Coordination



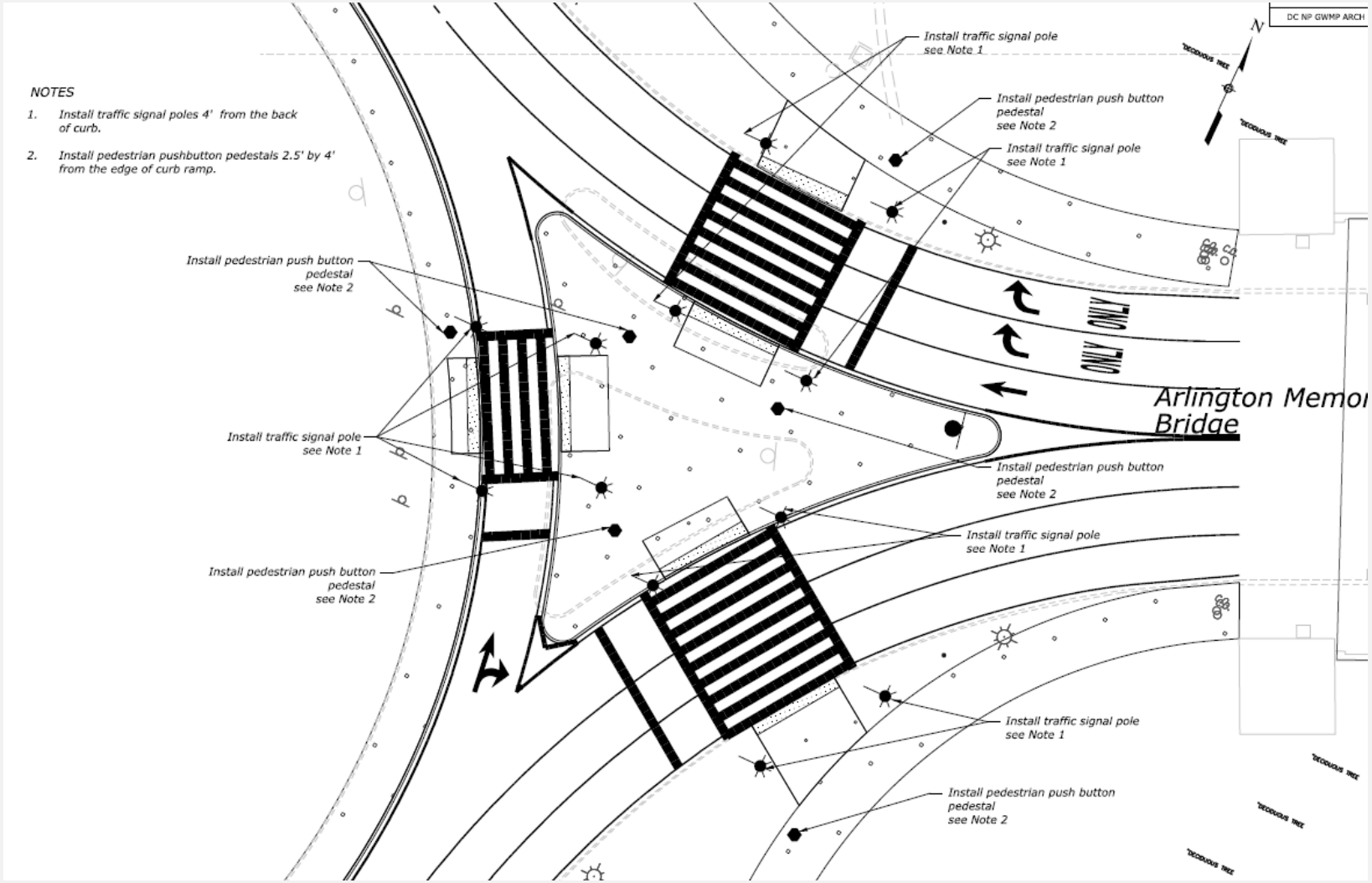
According to the submission, because of Memorial Circle's proximity to Ronald Regan Washington National Airport, NPS has considered whether the proposed project would adversely affect aviation safety. NPS does not possess specialized expertise in aviation safety and therefore relies on the expertise of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The FAA completed a feasibility study and concluded that the proposed project would have no significant adverse effect on airspace or on visual or instrument procedures at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and would not have any effect on airport facilities or radio/visual navigational and landing aids. The FAA feasibility study determined that the project would require obstruction lights, which have been incorporated into the project description. The National Park Service will implement any required mitigation measures and will address additional FAA compliance steps as the project progresses through subsequent design phases.

Proposed ADA Access



All pedestrian access routes will meet applicable federal accessibility standards, including the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) and the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). Notable accessible features will include wide sidewalks with compliant running and cross slopes, wide accessible curb ramps, and accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at crossings to provide crossing information to visually and mobility-impaired pedestrians. These elements will support safe, accessible, and convenient pedestrian circulation between Memorial Avenue and the Triumphal Arch for all visitors.

Proposed Visitor Loading and Unloading



Pedestrians will access the site at two locations along the Memorial Avenue axis, directly opposite the openings of the Triumphal Arch. Pedestrian access to these entry points is anticipated to occur in two stages: (1) crossings between the north and south sidewalks of Memorial Avenue and an intermediate triangular refuge area, and (2) crossings between the triangular refuge area and the center of the circle. Traffic will be periodically stopped to allow pedestrians to cross through coordinated signalization, balancing available green time for pedestrian crossings, when vehicles are stopped, with time allocated to conflicting vehicular movements, when pedestrians must wait. Similarly, pedestrians will exit the site using the same two access points along the Memorial Avenue axis. From the center of the circle, pedestrians will cross to the intermediate triangular refuge area and then continue from the refuge area to either the north or south sidewalk along Memorial Avenue.

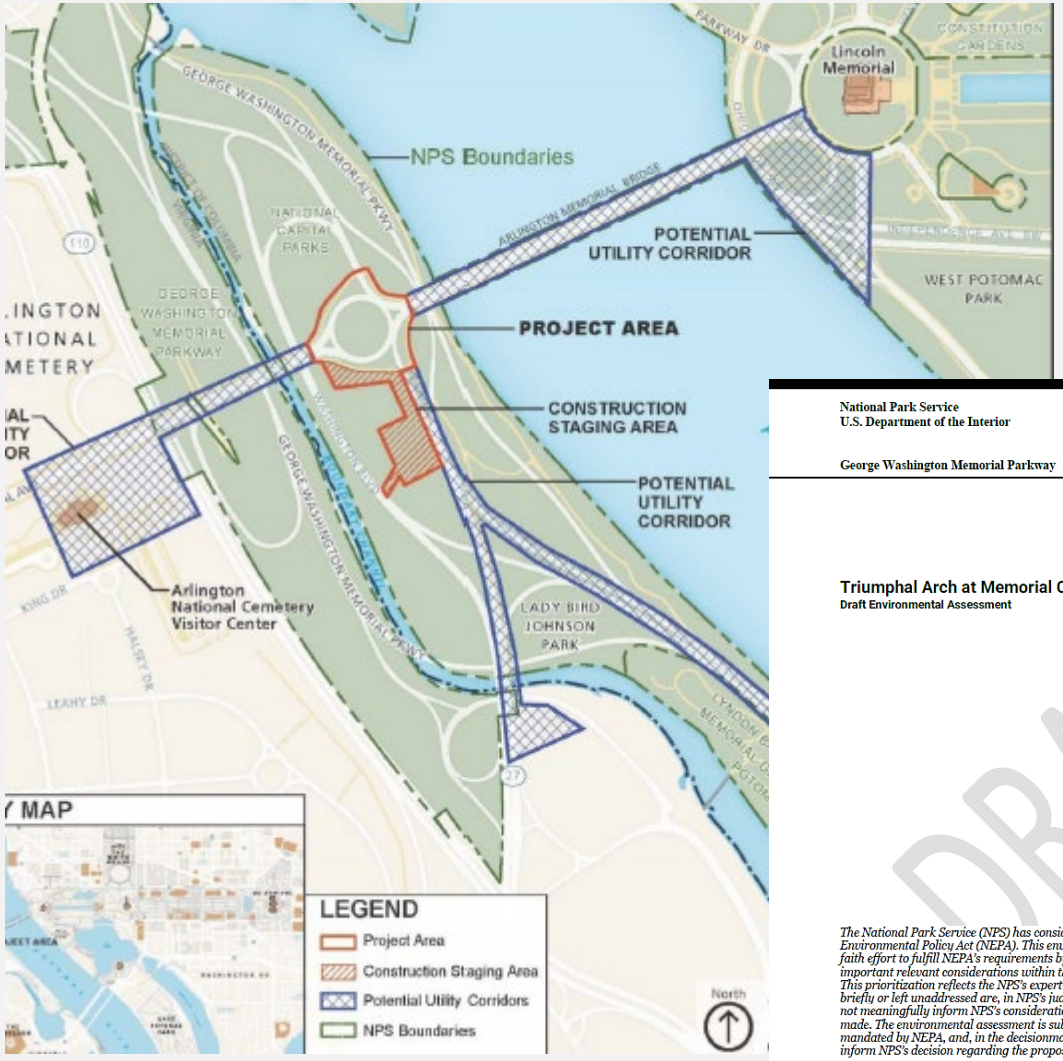
Proposed Visitor Loading and Unloading

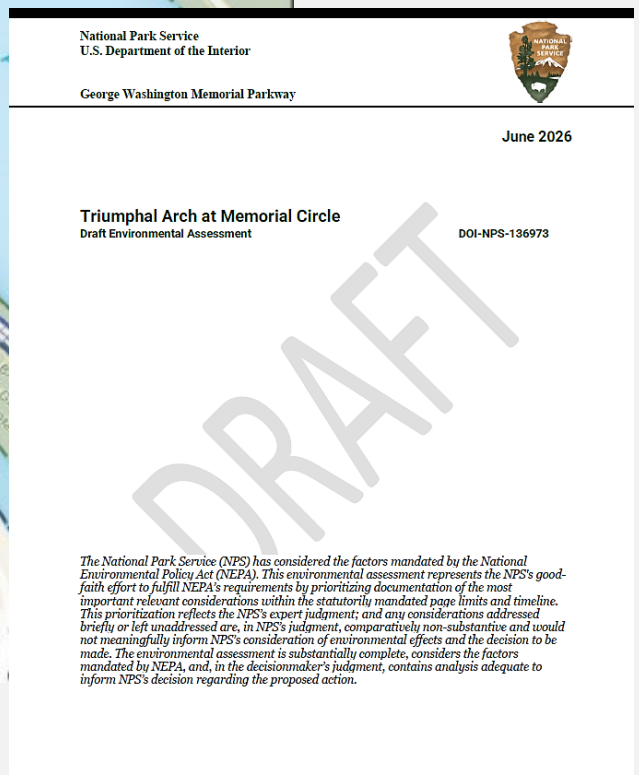
Tour buses and ridehailing services will be another common method for visitors to access the site. Providing safe and dedicated locations for tour buses and ridehailing services to drop-off or pick-up passengers is critical to the success of the transportation operations. Tour bus and ridehailing services would be encouraged to load and unload at the Arlington Memorial National Cemetery garage.

Memorial Avenue is a wide, approximately 60-foot roadway with ample space for curbside loading and unloading. NPS owns Memorial Avenue through the bridge over the Richmond Highway. Providing active loading along Memorial Avenue will allow visitors, especially those in larger groups, to more easily access the site and minimize unnecessary driving or walking circulation. Loading and unloading along Memorial Avenue is expected under particular circumstances.

Micromobility (scooters, electric bike share, etc.) is not anticipated to be a common means of site access due to the entirety of Lady Bird Johnson Park being a designated Shared Mobility No Parking Zone.

Environmental Considerations





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

George Washington Memorial Parkway

June 2026

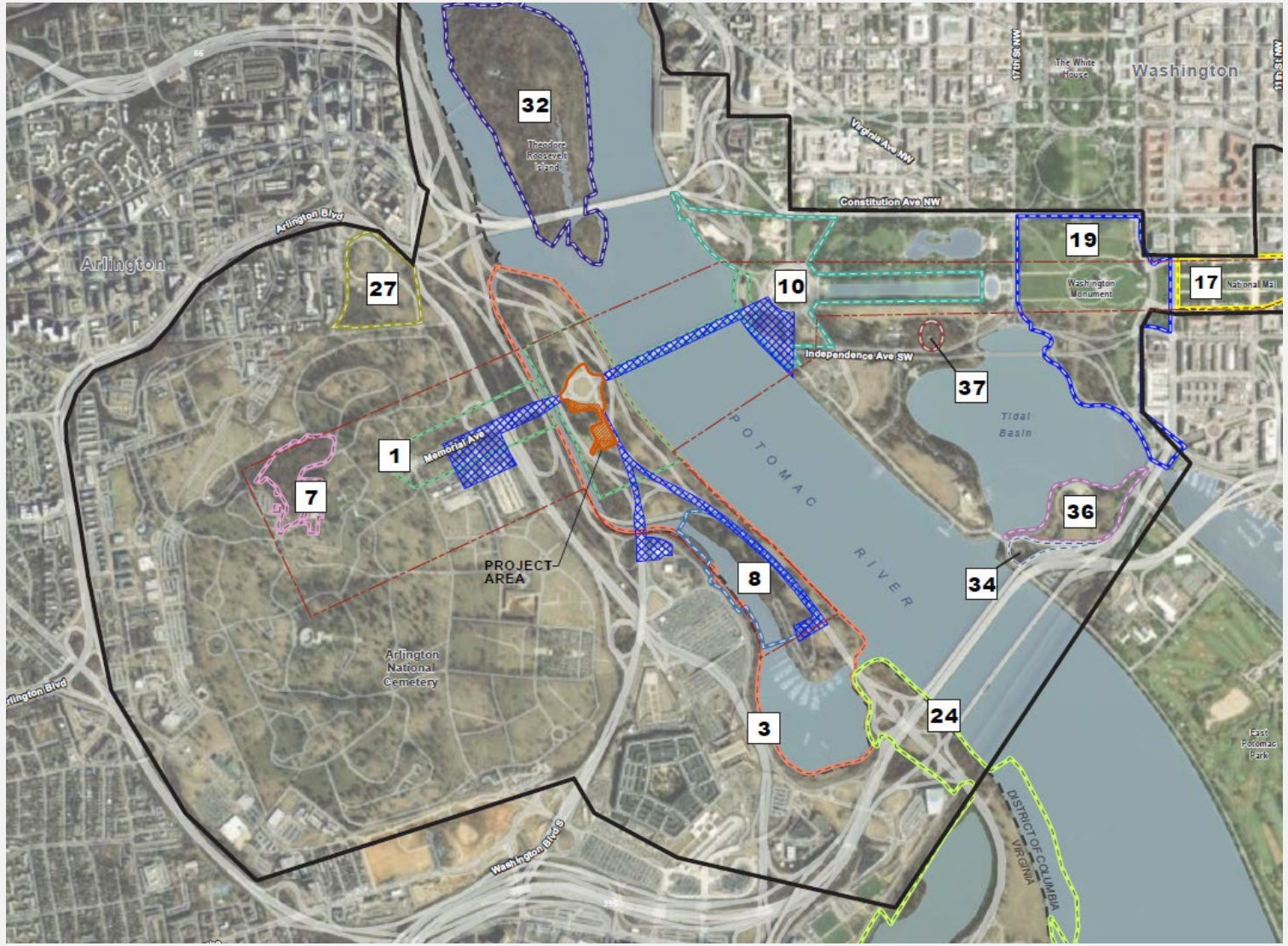
Triumphal Arch at Memorial Circle
Draft Environmental Assessment DOI-NPS-136973

DRAFT

The National Park Service (NPS) has considered the factors mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This environmental assessment represents the NPS's good-faith effort to fulfill NEPA's requirements by prioritizing documentation of the most important relevant considerations within the statutorily mandated page limits and timeline. This prioritization reflects the NPS's expert judgment; and any considerations addressed briefly or left unaddressed are, in NPS's judgment, comparatively non-substantive and would not meaningfully inform NPS's consideration of environmental effects and the decision to be made. The environmental assessment is substantially complete, considers the factors mandated by NEPA, and, in the decisionmaker's judgment, contains analysis adequate to inform NPS's decision regarding the proposed action.

As part of the design process, the NPS has conducted a review under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 review under the National Historical Preservation Act is ongoing. 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 is 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 along with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were completed on June 18, 2026, and were 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. However, this FONSI does not constitute a final decision or approval for the project. Typically, the NPS issues the FONSI and the associated Decision Document together; however, because certain components of the decision-making process have not yet been completed, including compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the NPS will issue a separate Decision Document at a later date. Preparation of a standalone Decision Document is consistent with the DOI NEPA Handbook.

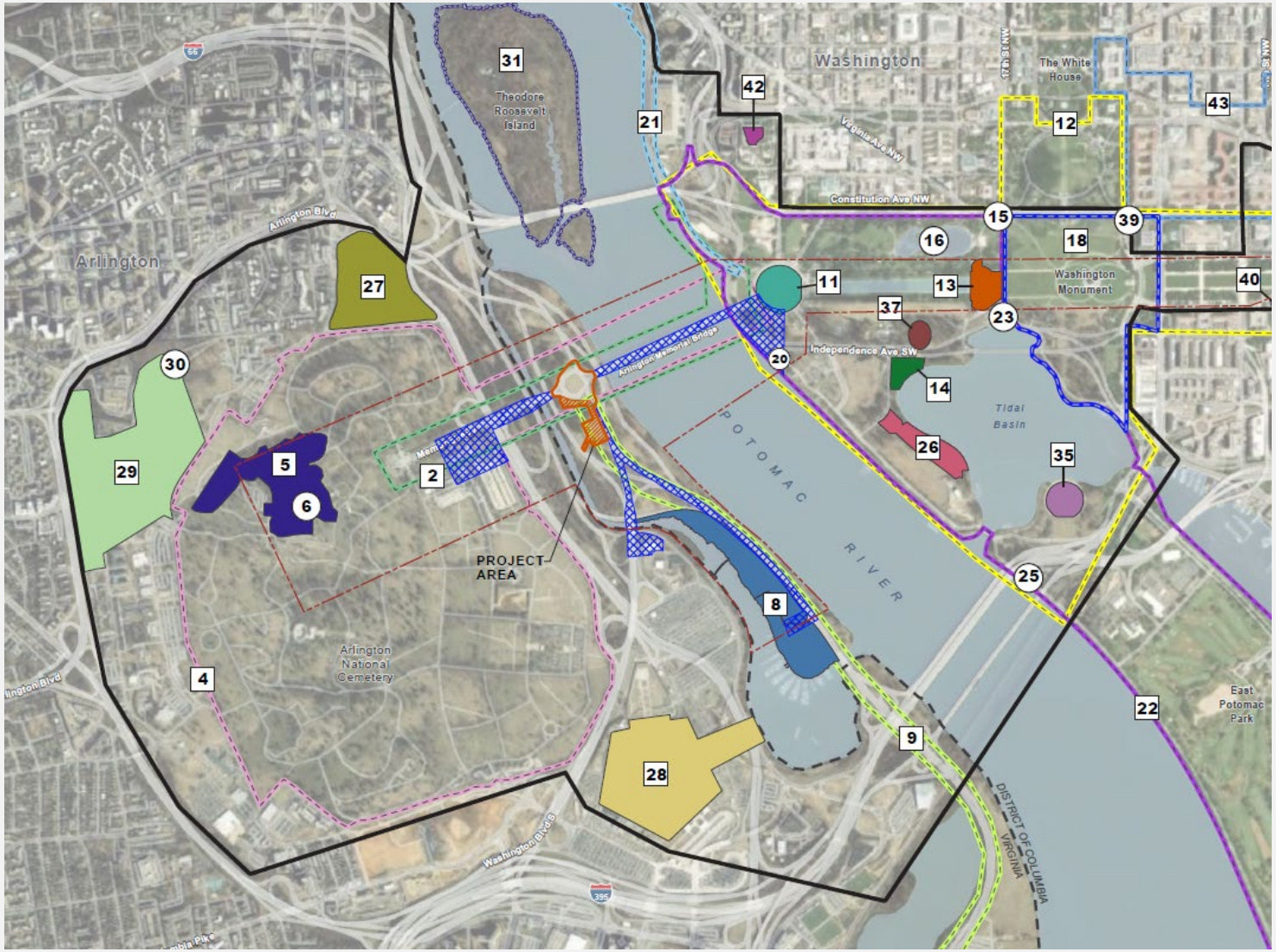
Historical Considerations



Cultural Landscapes in the Area of Potential Effect

To comply with Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act, the NPS prepared an Assessment of Effect which describes the undertaking and analyzes potential adverse effects on historic properties, including archeological resources, within the project area. This document along with a draft Programmatic Agreement was released for public comment on June 5, 2026, with a 10-day public comment period. The NPS initiated Section 106 consultation on June 5, 2026, and held a consulting parties meeting on June 15, 2026.

Historic Preservation



National Register of Historic Places in the Area of Potential Effect

The undertaking would result in effects on historic properties meeting the criteria of 36 CFR § 800.5(a)(1). The project would introduce a new permanent structure, associated hardscape, lighting, security elements, utility and stormwater infrastructure, and traffic and pedestrian circulation changes into Memorial Circle and the surrounding setting. The undertaking has the potential to impact the integrity of setting, design, feeling, and association of the Memorial Avenue Corridor Cultural Landscape, Lady Bird Johnson Park Cultural Landscape, Arlington Memorial Bridge and related features, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington House, and other historic properties within the Area of Potential Effects. The project would also alter the ceremonial and spatial relationship between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington House and introduce visual elements not presently found within Memorial Circle.

Archaeological Resources

A Phase IA Archaeological Assessment concluded that the direct-effects area has moderate to high archaeological sensitivity for intact precolonial and historic archaeological resources beneath the existing twentieth-century fill. Memorial Circle and the anticipated laydown area sit atop approximately 10 to 14 feet of fill over an earlier buried landscape of sandy clay, alluvial deposits, sandbars, shallow tidal flats, and floodplain settings associated with the Potomac River. Although no previously recorded archaeological site was identified within the direct-effects area itself, the surrounding area contains a substantial archaeological context, and intact buried deposits may remain. The assessment allows for additional Phase IB subsurface investigation with geoarchaeological analysis if ground disturbance would extend more than 10 feet below existing grade.