

DEMONSTRATIONS, SPECIAL EVENTS, AND NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS

METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYZING IMPACTS

The analysis looks at how the alternatives would affect demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events in the following areas:

- **Impacts on demonstration and event participants** — This topic analyzes the beneficial and adverse impacts on the numbers of people who can participate in demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events as a result of the physical capacity of the National Mall and specific sites, as well as ease of access.

An essential purpose of the National Mall is to provide space for the expression of First Amendment rights, and in accordance with in the U.S. Constitution the courts have determined that no limits may be placed on the number of people who can participate in First Amendment activities, regardless of any impacts that might otherwise be considered unacceptable.

This impact topic considers how varying degrees of crowding would affect participants. The following assumptions were made, based on input from the U.S. Park Police and George Mason University:

- Space of 3 square feet per person would constitute a high level of crowding, such as during a concentrated demonstration or on pleasant days during the peak of the National Cherry Blossom Festival or during the 2009 inauguration.
- Space of 7–10 square feet per person would be equivalent to a seated or standing audience at an event performance.
- **Impacts on demonstration and event organizers** — The topic analyzes how organizers would be affected by permitting, scheduling, and managing processes, by the type and range of venues for demonstrations, national celebrations, and

special events; by measures to protect the historical context, vistas, and symbolic character of the National Mall; by the convenience of access; and by any changes in management processes.

Impact Intensity Levels

The following impact thresholds were defined for demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events:

- **Negligible** — The impact would not be detectable or would be barely detectable to most participants and organizers, and there would be no discernible effect on the sustainability of park resources and the ability of the National Park Service to support demonstrations, national celebrations, or special events.
- **Minor** — The impact would be detectable to some participants or organizers, or it would have a limited effect, either adversely or beneficially, on the sustainability of park resources and the ability of the National Park Service to support demonstrations, national celebrations, or special events.
- **Moderate** — The impact would be readily apparent; it would have an appreciable impact on many participants and organizers; and it would clearly affect, either adversely or beneficially, the sustainability of park resources and the ability of the National Park Service to support demonstrations, national celebrations, or special events.
- **Major** — The impact would be severely adverse or exceptionally beneficial and apparent to most participants and organizers, and it would dramatically affect the sustainability of park resources and the ability of the National Park Service to support demonstrations, national celebrations, or special events.

Type of Impacts

Impacts can be beneficial or adverse. Beneficial impacts would enhance the management of and participation in demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events. Adverse impacts would have the opposite effect.

Duration of Impacts

Impacts could be temporary, short-term, long-term, or permanent.

- **Temporary** — The impact would usually last for a few hours or up to two days, such as a road closure for a day or less or limited access to an area during a demonstration.
- **Short-term** — The impact would generally last up to one year and could include setup / takedown times for large special events or national celebrations, seasonal closures for restoration, or limited access to an area to facilitate park operations or construction.
- **Long-term** — The impact would last longer than one year or for the life of the plan (up to 50 years).
- **Permanent** — The impact would last beyond the life of the plan (or longer than 50 years).

User Capacity Estimates

User capacity estimates do not include capacity estimates for NPS and D.C. roadways, which may be closed during major events (such as the Fourth of July or a presidential inauguration).

Maximum capacities of venues for demonstrations and special events were decreased by a certain percentage to allow for safe circulation, with more circulation needed at higher capacity levels

- **Union Square** — A 15% allowance for circulation at 3 sq. ft. / person with a reflecting pool, and a 10% allowance without a pool.
- **Mall center panels** — A 25% circulation allowance at 3 sq. ft. / person.
- **Mall tree panels** — A 30% circulation allowance at 7 sq. ft. / person due to trees.

- **General open areas** — A 10% circulation allowance at 7–10 sq. ft. / person.
- **Lincoln Memorial elm walks and reflecting pool area** — A 30% circulation allowance at 3 sq. ft. / person because of grade changes, the reflecting pool, and trees.

Regulations and Policies

Federal Regulations

Federal regulations that could affect the management of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events are discussed in chapter 1. As previously stated, the superintendent may limit public use or close areas to use; designate areas for specific uses; and terminate restrictions, limits, closure or visitor hours to protect public health and safety, environmental or scenic values, or natural or cultural resources; or to implement management responsibilities, equitable allocation and use of facilities, or the avoidance of conflict among visitor use activities (36 CFR 1.5; 36 CFR 7.96).

Furthermore, permitted activities are to be consistent with legislation, administrative policies, and based on a determination that public health and safety, environmental or scenic values, natural or cultural resources, scientific research, implementation of management responsibilities, proper allocation and use of facilities, or the avoidance of conflict among visitor use activities will not be adversely affected (36 CFR 1.6; 36 CFR 7.96). A permit may be denied if the capacity of the area or facility would be exceeded by one or more of these factors.

An essential purpose of the National Mall is to provide space for the expression of First Amendment rights. This purpose, anchored in the U.S. Constitution, does not include limits on the number of people who can participate in First Amendment activities on the National Mall, regardless of any impacts that might otherwise be considered unacceptable.

Regulations at 36 CFR 7.96 specifically relate to the National Capital Region and define permit requirements for demonstrations and special events, as well as limitations, for park areas managed by the National Mall and Memorial

Parks, including the National Mall. The determination whether to approve permits for special events will be based on the following criteria (36 CFR 7.96(g)(5)(vi):

- (A) Whether the objectives and purposes of the proposed special event relate to and are within the basic mission and responsibilities of the National Capital Region, National Park Service.
- (B) Whether the park area requested is reasonably suited in terms of accessibility, size, and nature of the proposed special event.
- (C) Whether the proposed special event can be permitted within a reasonable budgetary allocation of National Park Service funds considering the event's public appeal, and the anticipated participation of the general public therein.
- (D) Whether the proposed event is duplicative of events previously offered in National Capital Region or elsewhere in or about Washington, D.C.
- (E) Whether the activities contemplated for the proposed special event are in conformity with all applicable laws and regulations.

NPS Management Policies 2006

First Amendment Rights

The *NPS Management Policies 2006* affirm the use of park land for public assemblies, meetings, demonstrations, religious activities, and other public expressions of views protected under the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution, in accordance with 36 CFR 2.51 or 36 CFR 7.96.

There must be equal opportunities for differing sides of an issue to be heard, and NPS staff must remain neutral toward the activity while remaining responsible for the protection of participants, spectators, private property, public property, and park resources.

Special Events

Special events may be permitted when there is a meaningful association between the park area and the event, and when the event will contribute to visitor understanding of the park area

(NPS 2006e, sec. 8.6.2.1). An event will not be permitted when it is conducted for the material or financial benefit of a for-profit entity, it awards participants an appearance fee or prizes, it requires in-park advertising or publicity, or it charges a separate public admission fee (NPS 2006e, sec. 8.6.2.1).

Special events will not be permitted if they would result in unacceptable impacts, such as impeding the ability to achieve desired natural and cultural resource conditions; diminishing opportunities for current or future generations to enjoy, learn about, or be inspired by park resources or values; or unreasonably interfere with park programs or activities, appropriate uses, the atmosphere of peace and tranquility, or NPS concessioner or contractor operations (NPS 2006e, sec. 8.2 and 1.4.7.1).

Recreational use permits are required for use of designated fields and areas (DC Recreation Board 1972).

Filming and Photography Policy

Filming and photography, whether commercial or non-commercial, are allowed provided the activity does not cause unacceptable impacts (NPS 2006e, sec. 8.6.6). Commercial filming requires a permit (NPS 2006e, sec. 8.6.6.2).

IMPACTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

Direct and Indirect Impacts

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Participants

Public transportation access varies by location, with many sites having excellent transit access, such as Union Square (two subway stations within a five-minute walk), the Mall (the Smithsonian Metro entrance is on the Mall and four other subway stations are within a five-minute walk), and the Washington Monument (two subway stations are within a five-minute walk). Some sites such as Constitution Gardens, the Lincoln Memorial, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the Tidal Basin are farther from public transit, and most athletic fields are a 15–25 minute or more walk from the nearest Metro station. Activities at sites farther from public

transportation could result in additional parking demand or participants having to use supplemental transportation. Access impacts on demonstration and special event participants would continue to be short- and long-term, minor to moderate, and beneficial depending on the location of the activity.

The following examples are typical of use capacities and experiences that could be expected on the National Mall. The physical capacity of different types of spaces is based on ranges of how much space (in square feet) is needed for each person in different types of situations, and the expected social experience that level of use would entail.

- **Maximum Daily Capacity (Union Square to the Lincoln Memorial)** — An estimated 2.1 million people could be accommodated on the National Mall from east end to the west end, including Constitution Gardens. This capacity is based on 3 square feet per person in high-use areas and 7–50 square feet per person in multipurpose areas. Experiences would be highly crowded, with minimal opportunities for more contemplative experiences.
- **Fourth of July Celebration** — An estimated 750,000 people could be accommodated on the National Mall at 10–50 square feet per person, which is the average level of use and accommodates informal picnicking. (Note: An additional 100,000 people could view fireworks from the Capitol grounds, and thousands more from George Washington Memorial Park in Virginia.) Since the Fourth of July is a major national celebration, visitors could expect many other people.
- **National Cherry Blossom Festival** — The National Cherry Blossom Festival largely takes place around the Tidal Basin, and estimates assume an 8-hour day, with people spending about two hours walking around the basin. At a maximum capacity of 3 square feet per person on walks, 25,000 people could be accommodated on the walks at any one time, plus 15,000 at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza, the Tidal Basin parking lot, and related areas, with a maximum daily capacity of 200,000

people. Visitor experiences would be highly social, with opportunities for less crowded conditions only in the early morning or evening.

- **Smithsonian Folklife Festival** — Assuming that only the center panels on the Mall would be used, the capacity of the festival at any one time would be around 44,000. This assumes 10 square feet per person on the Mall, 50 square feet per person on walks, and 200–1,000 square feet per person in adjacent areas.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Organizers

Demonstrations and special events would continue to be scheduled on a space available basis 12 months in advance, so there would be no new impacts on organizers. Cost reimbursement for damages would continue to be required in the permitting process for special events.

Demonstrations would continue to be managed in accordance with federal regulations at 36 CFR 7.96 and NPS *Management Policies 2006* under all alternatives. Permits would continue to be required generally for all demonstrations with more than 25 people. Demonstration periods could be extended unless a previously permitted use would preclude double occupancy. For example, a limited number of demonstrations related to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial have continued for many years. Typically demonstrations are temporary, lasting a very short time, with setup and takedown occurring within one or two days. For some demonstrations and events stages and sound systems are used, and facilities such as restrooms and temporary trash containers are provided by the organizers. Annually it is likely there would continue to be fewer than a dozen very large demonstrations that would limit the ability of other event or demonstration organizers to find space available. There would be no new impacts.

Some demonstrations and events would continue to use stages, sound systems, and large video screens to simulcast events or to locally improve visibility of events. There would be no new impacts.

Permits for special events and commercial filming would continue to be required.

Different areas of the National Mall would continue to be closed for construction, restoration, or maintenance projects, making them unavailable for demonstrations, national celebrations, special events, or other permitted activities. This could result in short- to long-term, minor, adverse impacts on event organizers because some venues might not be available. During these times, such as when the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is constructed, the National Park Service would make every effort to ensure that public access to other sites would remain in order to minimize the impact.

Conclusion

There would be no change in permit regulations for demonstrations and special events under any alternative. Impacts common to all alternatives related to public access would be short- and long-term, minor to moderate, and beneficial or adverse depending on the distance of an activity from public transportation. Infrastructure improvements at the Lincoln Memorial would improve the ability to host performances and demonstrations, as well as facilitate setup and takedown operations, resulting in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts. Closing different areas of the National Mall for construction, restoration, or maintenance projects could result in short- to long-term, minor, adverse impacts on event organizers because some venues might not be available. Cumulative impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions could be long-term, major, beneficial impact if some events were relocated from the National Mall, thus reducing impacts. There would be long-term, major, beneficial impacts on event organizers and participants if a new subway stop was provided near the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

IMPACTS OF THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Direct and Indirect Impacts

The National Mall was never designed for the current high levels of use that occur during some demonstrations and national celebrations. The

number of special events on the National Mall has increased dramatically, at least in part because of the prestige and status that comes from being at the heart of the nation's capital. However, this degree of use, along with longer than necessary setup and takedown times, has caused damage to resources and infrastructure, resulting in undesirable landscape conditions and appearance. Locations of existing venues for demonstrations and special events are shown on the Civic Stages plan map.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Participants

Under the no-action alternative there would be no change in the ability to participate in demonstrations, national celebrations, or special events. The user capacities of individual venues for demonstrations and special events, allowing for circulation space, would be as follows:

- *Union Square* — 100,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Mall center panels (between 3rd and 14th streets)* — 500,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), plus 80,000 in the elm tree panels (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *Washington Monument grounds* — 700,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Lincoln Memorial* — 7,000 on the steps and plaza (7 sq. ft. / person), and 90,000 along the reflecting pool (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *JFK hockey fields* — 60,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *West Potomac Park ballfields / polo grounds (west of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial)* — 220,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *D.C. War Memorial area* — 425 (10 sq. ft. / person)
- *Tidal Basin* — Parking area: 5,000 (10 sq. ft. / person), walks: 25,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Jefferson Memorial steps and plaza* — 4,000 (10 sq. ft. / person)

There would be no change to public access to the National Mall. No sites have sufficient public restrooms to accommodate the needs of demonstrations, national celebrations, or special events, and all venues necessitate the use of

Civic Stage — No-Action Alternative

sponsor-provided portable restrooms. There would be no change in short- or long-term impacts on demonstration or event participants. Conditions in some venues would continue to be less than desirable for some participants. Dust, resulting in breathing and vision problems, would continue to affect some participants on the Mall. During hot and humid weather participants would find most venues uncomfortable and would seek shade and seating, as well as require water.

Many event stages have been relocated so that they do not block important views, thus enhancing the experience for participants, and preserving historic views from and to various monuments or memorials, as well as the U.S. Capitol and the White House.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Organizers

Permitting, Scheduling, and Management Processes

Under the no-action alternative the permitting process for special events would continue to require application in person; no on-line process would be available. The limited number of program staff would continue to preclude consistent support for and monitoring of events. Planning information about event venues could remain limited. Very few events would be turned down except when venues had been previously scheduled; however, organizers would not know that in advance. There would be no change in impacts on demonstration and event organizers.

Venues

Organizers of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events would continue to have a wide variety of venues with views of national symbols as their backdrop. As described in the

“Affected Environment,” the National Mall contains a number of venues of varying sizes that are attractive to demonstration and event organizers. Some of these venues would be temporarily closed during future construction, restoration, or maintenance projects, resulting in temporary to short-term, minor to moderate, adverse impact on organizers because of the availability of specific venues. Other sites would remain available and could be used. The National Park Service would make every effort to ensure that public access remained to the greatest degree possible and that the size of the impact would be minimized.

Impacts at specific venues are discussed below.

Union Square. Union Square would continue to be used periodically as a highly visible venue for demonstrations and events up to 100,000 people due to its proximity to the U.S. Capitol and views of Washington Monument. However, its desirability as a venue would continue to be limited by the stepped level changes, logistical and access challenges, lack of visitor facilities, and the line of bollards running through the center of the site. The very large Capitol Reflecting Pool would continue to make circulation and the placement of support facilities awkward, and the occasional malodorous conditions from the uncirculated water would continue. Portable restrooms would have to continue to be brought into the site for demonstrations and special events. There would be no change in impacts on event organizers.

The Mall. Under the no-action alternative the Mall would continue to host demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events, and use would continue nearly nonstop from spring to fall. The large open turf areas in the center provide flexible space for event layout. This highly visible location, with superb background views of the U.S. Capitol to the east and the Washington Monument to the west, along with the historic landscape, make this a very desirable venue.

Organizers of larger demonstrations or events are required to use temporary flooring to reduce impacts and to provide restrooms. Refreshment stand owners would continue to coordinate with event organizers to provide additional food items. Organizers would have to safely provide

for utilities and to cover power and water lines so they are not tripping hazards; stringing power and communication lines through tree canopies is not allowed. Both the 12th Street side panels and north side panels near 9th and 8th streets are gaps in the regularly spaced elm trees, and these gaps would continue to be used for event logistics, storage, and construction staging. Unattractive visual impacts of fenced construction storage sites and the presence of large trucks for long periods of time would continue. Portable restrooms would continue to be lined up along Madison and Jefferson drives, creating a temporary wall and blocking visual access to adjacent areas. Dust generated by the gravel walkways would continue to create adverse effects for organizers, as well as participants.

The elm tree panels along the Mall may be used during First Amendment demonstrations that require this additional space because of size. In accordance with federal regulations, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival is authorized for a two-week period in late June or early July between 7th and 14th streets on the Mall (36 CFR 7.96 (g)(4) (D)); a recent rule change designates an eight-week period for setup and takedown. The elm tree panels are used as a shady location (where it can be 10 degrees cooler) for temporary event facilities during the festival. NPS concession food service providers also use nearby turf areas under the elm trees during events such as the Library of Congress Book Festival, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and the Black Family Reunion. Other event organizers are not allowed to use the elm tree panels for these purposes, creating a perception of dual standards and unequal treatment. This policy would continue to result in long-term, moderate, adverse impacts on other event organizers.

Washington Monument Grounds. Under the no-action alternative the Washington Monument grounds would continue to host a wide variety of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events since the grounds are conveniently accessible to two Metro stations and provide large open turf areas that can be flexibly used. One of the Independence Day concerts would continue to be presented on the grounds, as authorized by federal regulation. Temporary facilities such as portable restrooms, stages and related

backstage areas, and first-aid stations are provided.

The Sylvan Theater would continue to be used for all sizes of events despite the awkward orientation of the theater area to circulation patterns and hillside seating. The theater stage would continue to lack many of the amenities desired by organizers, who may need to provide temporary upgrades for sound and lighting systems.

The northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the north portion of the main grounds would continue to be used as venues for stages and event facilities, with temporary utility connections provided by organizers. Temporary events facilities would still occasionally block the planned historic view between the White House and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. There would be no change in impacts on demonstration or event organizers under the no-action alternative.

Constitution Gardens. Constitution Gardens would continue to be a desirable location for a few small to moderate size activities, traditionally related to Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Tents would continue to be placed along walkways, and the open turf area west of the lake would provide a larger area for demonstrations and events. A perceived lack of transit access makes the location less attractive to some organizers. There would be no change in impacts on demonstration or event organizers under the no-action alternative.

Lincoln Memorial. Under the no-action alternative the east plaza and lower approachway of the Lincoln Memorial would continue to be a desirable venue for small to large demonstrations and events because of its iconic status and historic role in hosting activities related to civil rights and liberties, as well as the spectacular vista toward the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol. Demonstrations and special events would continue to be managed according to the 2009 *Guidelines for Special Events and Demonstrations* to protect cultural resources.

Activities would continue to be primarily located on paved surfaces, with the memorial stairs and lower approachway providing informal seating. Turf areas alongside the reflecting pool would

also continue to be used. Because subway access is 0.75 mile away, occasionally organizers have provided bus transportation to the memorial.

West Potomac Park Riverfront. The West Potomac Park riverfront and athletic fields under the no-action alternative would continue to see regular use spring through fall for special events, especially walks, runs, and races, which may use Ohio Drive and West Basin Drive or the athletic fields as staging areas. Because the riverfront area is within a short walk from parking lots, participants may arrive by bicycle or cross the bridge from Virginia, and organizers do not have to provide access. There would be no change in impacts on demonstration or event organizers under the no-action alternative.

Tidal Basin. The Tidal Basin would remain the center of the highly attended annual National Cherry Blossom Festival, and it would continue to be available for other activities. It is a desirable location for special events because of the concentration of spring flowering trees, the relationship to nearby memorials, and the visibility of the Washington Monument in the background. An untapped seasonal opportunity is the vibrant fall color of cherry trees around the Tidal Basin.

Management changes that were made in 2008 for the festival would continue, including closing the parking lot and using it for temporary facilities. Free shuttles would be provided from parking areas in East Potomac Park. The lack of pedestrian lighting around the Tidal Basin may continue to make the venue less attractive for nighttime use, and lantern-led tours are provided. There would be no change in impacts on demonstration or event organizers under the no-action alternative.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Under the no-action alternative the Thomas Jefferson Memorial steps and plaza would continue to be an attractive location for demonstrations and special events because of opportunities for informal seating, with the plaza functioning as a performance area. Vistas to the White House and the U.S. Capitol from areas on the plaza and steps are an important part of the memorial's appeal to organizers. Utility connections on the plaza would continue to be available to organizers. The large paved plaza and wide walks near

the memorial would continue to provide flexible space for temporary facilities, and these areas can support the weight of delivery vehicles. As a result of changes in 2008, organizers are encouraged to locate stages so they do not block views between the memorial and the White House. There is parking for 300 vehicles within a 5-minute walk, but the 15- to 20-minute walk from the nearest Metro station would mean that event organizers might want to provide shuttle transportation. Until a permanent security perimeter is completed, the presence of temporary concrete barriers would remain unattractive, and controlled access would continue to be inconvenient. There would be no change in impacts on demonstration or event organizers under the no-action alternative.

Cumulative Impacts

Past Actions

The number of requests for permitted events annually has substantially increased over the last thirty years. Past court decisions have reaffirmed First Amendment rights, and there would be no change in the ability of First Amendment demonstrators to use available and allowable venues, including the Mall elm tree panels.

Current Actions

Other federal park areas in Washington, D.C., where demonstrations may be held include Franklin Park, McPherson Square, U.S. Reservation 31 (west of 18th Street and south of H Street NW), Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway (west of 23rd Street and south of P Street NW), and U.S. Reservation 46 (north of Pennsylvania Avenue, west of 8th Street, and south of D Street SE). However, none of these areas is able to accommodate the scale of demonstrations that have been accommodated on the National Mall just because of the physical space. The ability of a group to host an event or demonstration on the National Mall has become increasingly prestigious.

As areas around the National Mall have been or are being developed, such as the construction of the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, space available for demonstrations and events has become more concen-

trated onto the Mall, particularly between 3rd and 14th streets. The volume of events has increased dramatically in the last 30 years, although the number has been fairly stable since the mid 1990s. Also, locations and seasons for events have become traditional, and more special events have become annual events, adding to the pressure on park resources as multiple demonstrations and events are accommodated.

Improvements under all alternatives funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 would improve infrastructure at the Lincoln Memorial for hosting performances and demonstrations. Wider paved areas along the reflecting pool would also improve pedestrian access, and utility and communication connections would be provided. These improvements would facilitate setup and takedown operations for organizers, resulting in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts.

Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

In the future some traditional event locations could change because of a strong meaningful connection to future facilities and locations. For example, the Library of Congress Book Festival could move to the paved areas around the Capitol Visitor Center east plaza and 1st Street, which would provide an excellent, highly visible, accessible, and sustainable location adjacent to the Library of Congress. The Black Family Reunion might choose to relocate to outdoor spaces at the future National Museum of African American History and Culture or near the future Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial. The relocation of some events to other sites could have a long-term, major, beneficial impact on the ability of the entire National Mall to accommodate events and for resources to recover.

The NCPCC *Monumental Core Framework Plan* has identified an opportunity to create a new event venue of approximately 30 acres south of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, which could host events from 100 to 200,000 people. The Thomas Jefferson Memorial and Washington Monument would be visible from this venue. This venue, however, would more likely appeal to special events rather than demonstrations since neither the U.S. Capitol nor the White House is visible from this location. Other future

projects include consolidating the 14th Street / I-395 and railroad bridges and developing a new subway stop within a five-minute walk of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. This would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts for participants and organizers of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events held at that location.

Cumulative Impact Summary

Present rehabilitation projects for the Lincoln Memorial lower approachway and reflecting pool, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza, and the D.C. War Memorial would have long-term, minor, beneficial impacts on organizers and negligible to minor beneficial impacts on participants because of improved infrastructure. It is also possible that some event organizers could select other venues in the future, resulting in long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts because events would be better dispersed, thus taking pressure off high-demand locations on the National Mall. It is also possible that a large event and recreation venue could be developed south of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, as proposed in the *Monumental Core Framework Plan*, with access from a new Metro station. This action could have long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts on both event organizers and participants.

The impacts of these past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions on event organizers would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial because of rehabilitated and new event venues. However, taken together with the impacts of the no-action alternative, cumulative impacts would be long-term, moderate to major, and adverse, with an appreciable contribution from the no-action alternative because venues and visitor services and amenities would become increasingly inadequate.

Conclusion

Present impacts on participants and organizers would continue, with the National Mall continuing to host a large number of events and demonstrations at current venues, including the Mall elm tree panels, with growing demand for space (particularly the Mall, the Washington Monument grounds, and the Lincoln Memorial)

because of the status and visibility conferred on events due to the presence of national icons in the background. Over the life of this plan impacts would become moderate to major and adverse because of inadequate venues and the lack of visitor facilities and amenities. These impacts, together with the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, would result in long-term, moderate to major, adverse cumulative impacts because venues, as well as visitor services and amenities, would become increasingly inadequate.

IMPACTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Direct and Indirect Impacts

Existing and proposed venues under the preferred alternative for demonstrations and special events are shown on the Civic Stage plan map.

Impact on Demonstration and Event Participants

The preferred alternative recognizes that the National Mall will continue to see high levels of use because of its symbolism and its location in the core of the nation's capital. Under the preferred alternative the National Mall could accommodate more participants in demonstrations and events. The National Mall could accommodate about 230,000 more people compared to the no-action alternative because of increased capacities at the following venues:

- *Union Square* — 290,000 people (3 sq. ft. / person) with a smaller reflecting pool that could be drained for special events; this is nearly triple the current capacity of 100,000.
- *Constitution Gardens* — 4,000 (200 sq. ft. / person).
- *Tidal Basin walks* — 50,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), an increase of 25,000 over the no-action alternative due to wider walks
- *Thomas Jefferson Memorial south plaza* — 10,000 (10 sq. ft. / person)

Maximum capacities at the following venues would be the same as the no-action alternative,

Civic Stage — Preferred Alternative

except that the Mall elm tree panels could not be used during special events:

- *Mall center panels* — 500,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), plus an additional 80,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) in the elm tree panels during First Amendment demonstrations only
- *Washington Monument grounds* — 700,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Lincoln Memorial* — 7,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) with an additional 90,000 along the reflecting pool (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *JFK hockey fields* — 60,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *West Potomac Park ballfields / polo grounds* — 220,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *Tidal Basin parking area* — 5,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *D.C. War Memorial area* — 425 (10 sq. ft. / person)

- *Jefferson Memorial steps and plaza* — 4,000 (50 sq. ft. / person)

The impact of more people being able to participate in a wide range of demonstrations, celebrations, and special events would be long-term, major, and beneficial. This would primarily be as a result of redesigning Union Square so it could accommodate many more people.

There would be no change in terms of access to various venues around the National Mall.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Organizers

Permitting, Scheduling, and Management Processes

Event permitting processes under the preferred alternative would be revamped. The public and organizers would be able to go on-line and check venue availability and capacity, as well as explore venue facilities, requirements, and general information. Event standards for each venue (such as temporary surfacing materials

and acceptable locations for event staging and restrooms) would ensure the protection of park resources and facilitate setup and takedown operations for organizers.

Additional NPS staff would be dedicated to provide consistent advance planning information for every venue, along with support and monitoring that would be useful to event organizers. Event organizers would be encouraged to use venues that have a meaningful association with their group and that would be suited to their needs and goals. Event setup and takedown times would be included in permit applications. Additional staff would oversee events to prevent adverse resource impacts. Intense recovery procedures would be required following events.

Compared to the no-action alternative, changes in the permitting, scheduling, and management process for demonstrations and special events under the preferred alternative would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts to organizers.

Venues

Under the preferred alternative several venues on the National Mall used for civic activities, national celebrations, and special events would be redesigned to better sustain high levels of use. These venues would be able to accommodate more people; utilities, communications, and facilities would be provided to reduce setup and takedown times; information about daily activities and wayfinding to venues would be provided; and spaces that could accommodate temporary facilities such as portable restrooms or event offices and staging facilities would be designated to minimize the visual impact on planned vistas and the historic landscape. These actions would affect the majority of organizers and would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts on organizers' ability to stage demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events on the National Mall.

To preserve the character and symbolism of the National Mall, limited onsite space would be available in some locations for storage and construction supplies for event setup and takedown. This would have a temporary, moderate, adverse impact on organizers who may in the past have used larger areas for longer periods of time.

Like the no-action alternative, technology would continue to be used to increase the capacity of various venues and to extend venue areas.

Under the preferred alternative technology could also be used to provide opportunities for people to vicariously participate in offsite demonstrations through simulcasts or to take part in events at multiple venues. This action would be consistent with NPS policies to use websites to reach a broader audience.

The following discussion analyzes the impacts of demonstrations and special events in high-use areas on the National Mall.

Union Square. Under the preferred alternative Union Square would be developed into a desirable National Mall destination that could be easily transformed to accommodate or support a demonstration, national celebration, or special event. The site would also be able to support a variety of entertainment that could accompany some of these permitted activities and help take pressure off venues on the Mall.

A context-sensitive redesign would highlight the Grant Memorial and respect the historic landscape, witness trees, and the area's history, and it would nearly triple the square's physical capacity. Actions that would support the needs of organizers and make this venue more desirable for demonstrations and events include redesigning the reflecting pool and water features; providing hard surfaces to accommodate temporary facilities, as well as setup and takedown operations; developing utilities and communication system connections; improving pedestrian access and wayfinding; eliminating grade changes; and developing permanent visitor facilities. Providing restrooms that could be opened in sections to meet higher use demands as needed would make the site more convenient for organizers and would reduce the need to provide portable restrooms. If additional portable restrooms were needed, they could be grouped on paved surfaces in locations that could be easily serviced but outside historic viewsheds. Compared to the no-action alternative, actions at Union Square under the preferred alternative would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts for organizers.

The Mall. The intent of actions on the Mall under the preferred alternative would be to

accommodate very high levels of use at areas that would be designed to respect the historic design and character of the National Mall and to recover quickly after demonstrations or events. Circulation would be improved, gravel pathways replaced, off-Mall pedestrian connections improved, and orientation and wayfinding enhanced. Areas would be designed to accommodate operational and logistical needs of organizers, such as staging space in the air rights over the 12th Street tunnel and flexible office space that could be used by event organizers, and onsite NPS staff for event support, monitoring, emergency services, or first aid. This would reduce the need for trailers and trucks to be placed on the site for long periods of time. Permanent utility and communication connections would be provided in convenient locations to support all demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events. This would facilitate setup and takedown times, along with reducing tripping hazards from covered power and telephone lines.

Two new large, permanent restrooms would be conveniently located in the 12th Street corridor. The northside restroom would be designed so that stalls could be opened in sections as needed, and the southside restroom would be located near the Metro station entry. A small self-cleaning restroom would be located near the refreshment stand by the National Air and Space Museum. Required placement areas for additional portable restrooms would be conveniently dispersed on the Mall, and areas would be designed so that restrooms could be grouped to be easily serviced, to limit odors, and to minimize visual clutter.

Areas adjacent to roadways that are regularly used for portable stages or screens would be paved and easy access developed. Areas adjacent to refreshment stands would be renovated to be pleasant locations for more seating and more efficient food service during special events. Additional site furnishings would enhance the pedestrian experience, such as permanent seating (including group seating and shaded seating) along the north-south walks in the elm panels, cooling water features, and potted plants. Turf-grass would be installed along the tree-lined boulevards along Madison and Jefferson drives. New paving and facilities would be compatible

with the character of the Mall, and new irrigation systems would improve the appearance of the turf.

The elm tree panels along the Mall would continue to be available for demonstrations that require all available space, and they would also be available to general visitors for relaxation and recreation. However, under the preferred alternative the elm tree panels could no longer be used during special events for activities or temporary event facilities, such as tents and stages. This would result in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts on organizers of demonstrations because general conditions on the Mall would be improved and all organizers would be treated equitably.

However, the impact on a few event organizers would be long-term, adverse, and major because the elm tree panels could no longer be used for temporary event facilities, such as tents and stages. Under this alternative all facilities for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and one other special event would have to be located on the center grass panels, where there is sufficient space for their needs. Event organizers would benefit from other actions under the preferred alternative, such as permanent restrooms and flexible office space, as well as paved spaces to temporarily store events supplies and equipment. Under the preferred alternative event organizers would need to reorganize their layout plans.

Best practices, as well as visitor health concerns, indicate that major special events are better scheduled during off-peak seasons, and in the past events have been held at different times of year and in differing locations. Offering improved venues would enhance their desirability for demonstrations and events, resulting in long-term, major, beneficial impacts for most demonstration and event organizers compared to the no-action alternative because paved areas would provide convenient flexible venues that could be used more frequently and stay in desired condition.

Washington Monument Grounds. Under the preferred alternative the Washington Monument grounds would continue to host a wide variety of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events, including one of the Inde-

pendence Day concerts. Improving infrastructure for events and replacing the Sylvan Theater with a multipurpose performance venue would continue the historic function of the theater along with reinvigorating this space as a desirable event venue. High-capacity restrooms and food service would further meet organizers' needs. Utility and communication connections would be developed on the southwest side of 15th and Constitution Avenue NW, southeast of 17th and Constitution Avenue NW, and northwest of Survey Lodge, making these venues more attractive to organizers. Compared to the no-action alternative, the preferred alternative would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts to demonstration and event organizers because of a new, flexible multipurpose facility better oriented for participant enjoyment and visibility as well as convenient infrastructure.

Constitution Gardens. Under the preferred alternative Constitution Gardens would be a new special events venue with a unique informal garden character and outdoor performance space that could be appealing to moderate sized events and programs. Improved circulation, space for small special events or demonstrations, and support infrastructure would make venues at this site more desirable. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts on demonstration and event organizers would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial for event organizers of smaller events.

Lincoln Memorial. The Lincoln Memorial would continue to be a desirable venue for small to large activities under the preferred alternative because it is readily recognized throughout the country and it provides spectacular views toward the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol. Demonstrations and special events would continue to be managed according to the 2009 guidelines to protect the cultural resources. Because Metro access would be 0.75 mile away, organizers of some events could have to provide shuttle transportation. Resulting impacts on the Lincoln Memorial as an event and demonstration venue would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial compared to the no-action alternative.

West Potomac Park Riverfront. The West Potomac Park riverfront would continue to attract a number of special events, many of

which are athletic in nature. Charity walks, runs, and races would still be able to use roads in the area or the athletic fields as staging areas. Compared to the no-action alternative, the preferred alternative would result in long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on the attractiveness of venues in this area to organizers, primarily as the result of the improved appearance, separate bicycle routes or lanes, and reconfigured parking along Ohio Drive, and if warranted by demand, food service near Ohio Drive and West Basin Drive.

Tidal Basin. The Tidal Basin would continue to be available for a variety of activities because of the concentration of spring flowering trees, the relationship to nearby memorials, and the visibility of the Washington Monument in the background. It would remain the center of the highly attended annual National Cherry Blossom Festival. The Tidal Basin area would be more desirable to demonstration and event organizers under the preferred alternative because of widened walks, separate bicycle lanes, improved pedestrian connections, revised parking, upgraded visitor facilities (permanent restrooms, food service), and pedestrian lighting. Management changes made during the 2008 Cherry Blossom Festival would continue, including closing the parking lot to accommodate temporary facilities and providing shuttles to parking areas in East Potomac Park. The impact of changes under the preferred alternative, as compared to the no-action alternative, would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of numerous improvements, such as wider walkways and additional permanent visitor facilities that would make the National Cherry Blossom Festival and other special events much easier to host.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Under the preferred alternative the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza would be a more desirable venue for organizers of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events because of improved infrastructure and use of the south side of the memorial for special events, as well as continued opportunities for informal seating and performance areas, with vistas to the White House and the U.S. Capitol. Utility connections on the plaza would continue to be available to organizers.

The large paved plaza and wide walks near the memorial would still provide flexible space for locating temporary event facilities. As described for the no-action alternative, organizers would be encouraged to locate stages so they do not block views between the memorial and the White House. Nearby parking for 300 vehicles would remain, while Metro access would be a 15- to 20-minute walk, requiring some event organizers to consider providing shuttle access. Compared to the no-action alternative, the preferred alternative would have long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts, primarily as a result of improved conditions and a large flexible venue using space south of the memorial.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial, the same as those described under the no-action alternative, because of rehabilitated and new venues. The impacts of the preferred alternative would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of new venues on the National Mall, improved infrastructure that would facilitate event operations, and improved visitor facilities and amenities. These impacts, in combination with the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, would result in long-term, major, beneficial cumulative impacts, with a substantial beneficial contribution from the preferred alternative.

Conclusion

The overall impacts of the preferred alternative on participants and organizers for demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of changes in the permitting, scheduling, and management process, additional and more sustainable venues in highly desirable locations; equitable requirements for organizers; conveniently located civic infrastructure to facilitate event operations; permanent visitor facilities such as restrooms; a redesigned Union Square that could accommodate larger crowds; a flexible multipurpose space at the Sylvan Theater location; and a new venue at Constitution Gardens. However, impacts on the few organizers who could no longer use the elm tree panels on the Mall for temporary event facilities

(such as tents and stages) would be long-term, major, and adverse. The impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions combined with the impacts of the preferred alternative would result in long-term, major, beneficial cumulative impacts for all event organizers and participants, with a substantial beneficial contribution from the preferred alternative.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE A

Direct and Indirect Impacts

Existing and proposed venues under alternative A for demonstrations and special events are shown on the Civic Stage plan map.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Participants

Alternative A would be similar to the no-action alternative except that the use of the Mall elm tree panels would not be allowed during special events. The maximum capacities of individual venues would be as follows:

- *Union Square* — 100,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Mall center panels* — 500,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), plus an additional 80,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) in the elm tree panels during First Amendment demonstrations only
- *Washington Monument grounds* — 700,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Lincoln Memorial* — 7,000 on the steps and plaza (7 sq. ft. / person), and 90,000 along the reflecting pool (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *JFK hockey fields* — 60,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *West Potomac Park ballfields / polo grounds* — 220,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *D.C. War Memorial area* — 425 (10 sq. ft. / person)
- *Tidal Basin* — parking area: 5,000 (10 sq. ft. / person); walks: 25,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Jefferson Memorial steps and plaza* — 4,000 (10 sq. ft. / person)

Under alternative A events would be required to have a meaningful association with the National Mall venues (36 CFR 7.96(g)(5)(vi)(A)). As a

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result, some special events would no longer be permitted on the National Mall, resulting in a long-term, moderate, adverse impact on participants.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Organizers

Permitting, Scheduling, and Management Processes

Under alternative A the permitting process for special events would be revised similar to the preferred alternative, with on-line access for permit applications, a dedicated staff to provide consistent support and monitoring, and improved advance planning information useful to event organizers. The public and organizers would be able to go on-line and check venue availability and capacity as well as explore venue facilities, requirements, and general information. Event standards would be defined for each venue, including temporary surfacing materials, tent and facility installation methods, generator decibel levels, and acceptable locations for

temporary facilities (e.g., portable restrooms, incident command centers, and event staging). These standards would ensure the protection of park resources and facilitate setup and take-down operations for organizers.

Setup and takedown times would be included in permits. Special events would have to relate to and be within the basic mission and responsibilities of the NPS National Capital Region (36 CFR 7.96(g)(5) (vi)(A)). This would result in somewhat fewer special events being permitted on the National Mall, with long-term, moderate, adverse impacts on event organizers. Intense recovery procedures would follow events, with better cost recovery procedures to reduce expenses to the federal government.

Compared to the no-action alternative, alternative A would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts on demonstration and most event organizers because of improvements in permitting, scheduling, and management processes.

Venues

Under alternative A the renovation of some venues would help organizers in the staging of demonstrations, national celebrations, and events, resulting in long-term, minor, beneficial impacts compared to the no-action alternative. However, because alternative A would require a meaningful association to sites in accordance with 36 CFR 7.96(g)(5)(vi)(A) and NPS *Management Policies 2006*, the number of events would be reduced; this requirement would not apply to demonstrations, which would continue to be fully accommodated. Alternative A would not increase the capacity of sites to accommodate more people, and additional limitations would be placed on where temporary facilities could be located in order to protect historic vistas. These actions would result in temporary, moderate to major, adverse impacts on the use of venues compared to the no-action alternative. At the same time these actions would protect the character of the venues that make them popular to organizers, a long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impact. Technology would continue to be frequently used to increase the capacity of venues or extend them. Impacts at specific venues are discussed below.

Union Square. Under alternative A Union Square would be redesigned as an attractive civic square, emphasizing the site's history. Further restrictions would be placed on where temporary facilities could be located in order to keep planned historic vistas free of visual intrusions. The pool would be redesigned to facilitate pedestrian circulation, paving and access would be improved, and walks would be widened. Like the no-action alternative, no permanent visitor facilities (such as restrooms) would be provided. Despite the square's redesign as a more attractive destination, it would not be able to accommodate more people, and the maximum capacity would remain about 100,000 people. Compared to the no-action alternative, alternative A would result in long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts for event organizers from improved circulation and paving while at the same time further restricting the placement of temporary facilities, resulting in long-term, moderate, adverse impacts on the ability of organizers to stage events.

The Mall. The Mall would be preserved primarily as a historic space that would accommodate less use than the no-action alternative because fewer special events would be permitted since a meaningful association to venues would be required. However the health and appearance of the Mall would improve and that could make venues more attractive for organizers. Stages and screens for special events would have to be relocated in order to protect the eye-level east-west vista in the center of the grass panels. These facilities could be angled or placed off to the side as they were for the 2009 inauguration to take advantage of iconic backdrops. While this action would probably not make the Mall a less desirable venue, it would cause organizers to rethink event layout. Gravel walks would remain, and small restrooms would be provided near existing refreshment stands. Utility and communications infrastructure for events would be provided.

As described for the preferred alternative, no temporary facilities for events would be allowed in the elm tree panels, and the impacts would be similar — long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts for organizers of demonstrations because of a general improvement in the resources and appearance of the Mall, while impacts on event organizers would be long-term, major, and adverse on a few organizers. As described under the preferred alternative, some event organizers would have to reorganize their layout plans.

Compared to the no-action alternative, the Mall would likely be less attractive to event organizers under alternative A because of restrictions on the placement of temporary facilities to protect views and the requirement for a meaningful association with the park, even though better infrastructure, an improved appearance, and small permanent restrooms would be provided. The resulting impacts would be long-term, moderate, and adverse. Restrictions on the use of the side elm tree panels for temporary event facilities and tents would result in a long-term, moderate, adverse impact on a few event organizers.

Washington Monument Grounds. Use of the Washington Monument grounds would be similar to that described under the no-action alternative. The grounds would continue to host a wide variety of demonstrations, national

celebrations, and special events, including one of the Independence Day concerts. Temporary facilities such as portable restrooms, stages, and related backstage areas, first-aid stations would continue to be provided.

The Sylvan Theater would continue to be used for all sizes of events despite the awkward orientation of the theater area to circulation patterns and hillside seating. Organizers might need to provide temporary upgrades for sound and lighting systems in the theater.

The northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the north portion of the main grounds would continue to be used as venues for stages and event facilities, with temporary utility connections provided by organizers. Under alternative A no temporary event facilities, such as tents or vehicles, would be allowed to block the planned historic view between the White House and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Impacts would be long-term, minor to moderate, and beneficial for organizers because viewed protection requirements would retain a strong visual connection with national symbols.

Constitution Gardens. Constitution Gardens would continue to provide several small venues for a variety of demonstrations and events. These venues would provide paved walks and adjacent areas for small demonstrations and events, as well as a larger turf area west of the lake that could accommodate larger demonstrations and events. Facility improvements would include replacing the existing restroom and refreshment stand and adaptively reusing the Lockkeepers House as a staffed visitor contact station. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts under alternative A would be long-term, minor, and beneficial, primarily as a result of improved visitor facilities making the area more attractive and visible to organizers of small to mid-size demonstrations and special events.

Lincoln Memorial. Under alternative A the east plaza and the lower approachway of the Lincoln Memorial would continue to be a desirable venue for small to large demonstrations and events. Demonstrations and special events would continue to be managed according to updated *Guidelines for Special Events and Demonstrations* to protect cultural resources.

Activities would continue to be primarily located on paved surfaces, with the memorial stairs and lower approachway providing informal seating. Turf areas along the reflecting pool would also continue to be used. Because Metro access is 0.75 mile away, organizers might have to provide shuttle transportation. Impacts would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial, the same as the no-action alternative.

West Potomac Park Riverfront. Under alternative A, like the no-action alternative, the West Potomac Park riverfront and athletic fields would continue to see regular use spring through fall for special events. Walks, runs, and races would still use Ohio Drive or the athletic fields as staging areas. Because the riverfront area is within a short walk of parking lots, and participants may arrive by bicycle or cross the bridge from Virginia, organizers do not have to provide access. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial, primarily because of the improved appearance of natural resources.

Tidal Basin. As described under the no-action alternative, the Tidal Basin would continue to be a desirable venue for special events, primarily the National Cherry Blossom Festival. The Tidal Basin parking lot would continue to be closed during the Cherry Blossom Festival to provide ample paved surfaces for temporary facilities, but narrow walks would continue to limit movement. Shuttles would be provided from parking areas in East Potomac Park. The lack of pedestrian lighting around the Tidal Basin could continue to make the venue less attractive for nighttime use, and lantern-led tours would continue to be provided. Increasing educational programs by means of roving ambassadors during the Cherry Blossom Festival would help improve overall conditions for special events. An untapped opportunity for events at the Tidal Basin is during the vibrant fall color season. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Under alternative A the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza would continue to be attractive for demonstrations and special events because of opportunities for informal seating and performance areas, with vistas to the White House and the U.S. Capitol

from areas on the plaza and steps. Utility connections on the plaza would continue to be available to organizers. The large paved plaza and wide walks near the memorial would continue to provide flexible space for temporary event facilities. As described for the no-action alternative, since 2008 organizers are encouraged to locate stages so that they do not block views between the memorial and the White House. Nearby parking would remain for 300 vehicles, while a 15- to 20-minute walk to the nearest Metro station would prompt some event organizers to provide shuttle access. Controlled access would continue to be inconvenient. Compared to the no-action alternative, improved conditions under alternative A would have long-term, minor, beneficial impacts on the attractiveness of this area as a venue for special events.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial, the same as those described under the no-action alternative, because of rehabilitated and new venues. Alternative A would result in long-term, minor, beneficial impacts. These impacts, in combination with the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, would result in long-term, moderate, beneficial cumulative impacts, with a small beneficial contribution from alternative A.

Conclusion

The overall impacts of alternative A would be long-term, minor, and beneficial because of changes in the permitting, scheduling, and management process; somewhat improved venue conditions; and permanent small visitor facilities such as restrooms. However, the user capacity of desirable venues would remain the same, and mandated recovery time between events would mean fewer events could take place in high visibility venues such as the Mall and the Washington Monument grounds. However, impacts on the few organizers who could no longer use the elm tree panels on the Mall for temporary event facilities (such as tents and stages) would be long-term, major, and adverse. The impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, combined with the impacts of alternative A, would result in long-term, moderate, beneficial cumulative

impacts, with a small beneficial contribution from this alternative.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE B

Direct and Indirect Impacts

Existing and proposed venues under alternative B for demonstrations and special events are shown on the Civic Stage plan map.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Participants

The National Mall will continue to see high levels of use because of its symbolism and its location in the core of the nation's capital. Under alternative B about 240,000 more people than under the no-action alternative could be accommodated at demonstration, national celebrations, and special events because capacities would be increased at the following venues:

- *Union Square* — 290,000 (3 sq. ft. / person) without a reflecting pool; this is nearly triple the current capacity of 100,000.
- *Constitution Gardens* — 4,000 (200 sq. ft. / person); if the lake was drainable for an event, a maximum of 20,000 people at 10 square feet per person could be accommodated. Constitution Gardens is less likely to see maximum use capacity because the visual backdrop is not readily identified as being in the national capital, even though the Washington Monument is highly visible.
- *Tidal Basin walks* — 50,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), double the current capacity due to wider walks.

Maximum capacities at the following venues would be the same as the no-action alternative, except that the Mall elm tree panels could not be used during special events:

- *Mall center panels* — 500,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), plus an additional 80,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) in the elm tree panels if turf/root zones and soils were protected through an acceptable and authorized method
- *The Washington Monument grounds* — 700,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)

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- *The Lincoln Memorial* — 7,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) with an additional 90,000 along the reflecting pool (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *JFK hockey fields* — 60,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *West Potomac Park ballfields / polo grounds* — 220,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *Tidal Basin parking area* — 5,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *D.C. War Memorial area* — 425 (10 sq. ft. / person)
- *Jefferson Memorial steps and plaza* — 4,000 (50 sq. ft. / person)

The impact on the ability to participate in a wide range of demonstrations, celebrations, and events would be long-term, major, and beneficial, primarily as a result of redesigning Union Square so it could accommodate many more people.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Organizers

Permitting, Scheduling, and Management Processes

Under alternative B the permit process would be revamped so that organizers could apply for permits on-line. Staff would be dedicated to provide consistent support and monitoring, and advance planning information useful to event organizers would be improved. The public and organizers would be able to go online and check venue availability and capacity as well as explore the venue facilities, requirements, and general information, such as standards for specific venues, including temporary surfacing materials, tent installation methods, generator decibel levels, and acceptable locations for temporary facilities (e.g., portable restrooms, incident command centers, and event staging). These standards would ensure the protection of park resources and facilitate setup/takedown opera-

tions for organizers. Event organizers would be encouraged to use venues that would have a meaningful association to their group and that would be suited to their needs.

Additional staff would oversee events to prevent adverse resource impacts. Intense recovery procedures would follow events, and setup and takedown times would be built into permits. Compared to the no-action alternative, alternative B would make considerable changes in the processes for permitting, scheduling, and managing events, resulting in long-term, major, beneficial impacts.

Venues

Under alternative B several venues would be redesigned to sustain high levels of use for civic activities, national celebrations, and special events. Venues would accommodate more people; provide utilities, communications, and facilities that would reduce setup and takedown times; improve information about daily activities and wayfinding to venues; and provide paved or identified spaces that could flexibly accommodate temporary facilities such as portable restrooms, event offices, and staging facilities while minimizing the visual impact on planned vistas and the historic landscape. Some of the actions would be similar to the preferred alternative, which would also seek to accommodate a very high level of use. Like the preferred alternative, alternative B would affect the majority of organizers, resulting in long-term, major, beneficial impacts on the ability to stage, demonstrations, national celebrations, and events on the National Mall. Actions at specific sites are described below.

Union Square. Under alternative B Union Square would be redesigned as a desirable civic square that could be transformed to a demonstration or event site or to support national celebrations. The site would also be able to support a variety of entertainment that might accompany some of these permitted activities. The redesign would highlight the Grant Memorial and respect the historic landscape, witness trees, and site history. The physical capacity of the space would be nearly doubled. A context-sensitive redesign would accommodate more people by removing the reflecting pool,

developing utilities and communications connections to facilitate flexible use, improving pedestrian access and wayfinding, adding pavement to facilitate setup and takedown, and providing permanent multipurpose facilities such as restrooms and food service that could support the needs of organizers. Restrooms could be incrementally opened as needed to meet higher use demands, providing convenience for organizers and reducing the need to provide portable restrooms. Compared to the no-action, alternative B would result in long-term, major, beneficial, impacts for organizers.

The Mall. Under alternative B the Mall would be recognized as a venue that must accommodate very high levels of use and yet be able to recover quickly. Like the preferred alternative, the Mall's improved appearance and facilities would enhance its desirability for use by demonstration and event organizers. Additional actions under alternative B would include closing Madison and Jefferson drives to allow them to be used more frequently for event facilities and constructing an underground parking garage to provide onsite public parking. These changes would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts for organizers compared to the no-action alternative.

Under alternative B some temporary facilities for events could be placed in the side elm tree panels only if turf and root zones could be protected through effective, authorized methods. This difference would primarily affect the organizers of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, with a long-term, negligible to minor, beneficial impact. However, dual standards and unequal treatment of organizers, as described under the no-action alternative, would result in a long-term, moderate, adverse impact on other event organizers.

Washington Monument Grounds. As described for the no-action alternative, the Washington Monument grounds would continue to host a wide variety of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events under alternative B. Changes would be similar to those described for the preferred alternative and would include improved infrastructure to support events and a multipurpose performance venue to replace the Sylvan Theater, which would continue the historic function of the theater and

would reinvigorate this space as a desirable venue for events. High-capacity restrooms and food service would meet organizers' needs. Utility and communication connections would be developed on the southwest side of 15th and Constitution Avenue NW, the southeast side of 17th and Constitution Avenue NW, and northwest of Survey Lodge, making these venues more useful to organizers. If an underground parking garage was developed south of Independence Avenue, the site would be more desirable for demonstrations and special events because of improved parking. Compared to the no-action alternative, alternative B would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts on event organizers because of infrastructure improvements and a new multipurpose venue.

Constitution Gardens. Under alternative B Constitution Gardens would be developed as a visitor destination with nearby performance space that has infrastructure, as well as improved circulation routes to accommodate small special events and demonstrations. In addition, Constitution Gardens Lake would be redesigned so that it could be drained to provide a large paved venue for demonstrations and special events. As a result of these actions, alternative B would have long-term, major, beneficial impacts.

Lincoln Memorial. The Lincoln Memorial would continue to be a desirable venue for small to large activities, similar to the preferred alternative. Well-attended events and demonstrations would also continue to use the turf areas along the reflecting pool. Activities would continue to be primarily located on paved surfaces, with the memorial stairs and lower approachway providing informal seating. Demonstrations and special events would continue to be managed according to updated guidelines to protect the cultural resources. Because Metro access would remain 0.75 mile away, occasionally organizers would have to provide shuttle access. Impacts would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial, the same as the no-action alternative.

West Potomac Park Riverfront. Under alternative B, like the no-action alternative, the West Potomac Park riverfront area would continue to attract numerous special events, many of which are athletic in nature. Charity walks, runs, and races would continue to use roads in the area or

the athletic fields as staging areas. Developing a small staging area for demonstrations and events (grass pavement and utilities) south of 23rd Street and Independence Avenue would make this area more useful for organizers. Compared to the no-action alternative, alternative B would result in long-term, negligible to minor, beneficial impacts, primarily because the venues would be more attractive to organizers as a result of better infrastructure and the improved appearance of natural resources.

Tidal Basin. As described under the no-action alternative, the Tidal Basin would continue to be an attractive venue for special events, including the National Cherry Blossom Festival, because of the concentration of spring flowering trees, the relationship to nearby memorials, and the visibility of the Washington Monument in the background. Under alternative B the Tidal Basin would be more desirable as a venue because of widened walks, improved pedestrian connections, a nearby underground parking garage, improved visitor facilities (permanent restrooms and food service), pedestrian lighting, and more choice in recreation equipment rentals.

Management changes that were made in 2008 for the Cherry Blossom Festival would continue, including closing the Tidal Basin parking lot and using it for temporary facilities, and providing shuttle transportation from parking areas in East Potomac Park. The impact of alternative B on the attractiveness of the Tidal Basin for events and demonstrations, compared to the no-action alternative, would be long-term, major, and beneficial, primarily as a result of the numerous improvements to visitor facilities.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Under alternative B the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza would continue to be a desirable venue for organizers of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events because of opportunities for informal seating and performance areas, with vistas to the White House and the U.S. Capitol from areas on the plaza and steps. Utility connections on the plaza would continue to be available to organizers, and the large paved plaza and wide walks would continue to provide space for temporary facilities. As a result of management changes made in 2008, organizers are encouraged to locate stages so they do not block

views between the memorial and the White House. Parking for 300 vehicles within a five-minute walk would remain, but a longer walk from the nearest Metro station (15–20 minutes) would prompt some event organizers to provide a shuttle service. Controlled access would continue to be inconvenient. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts under alternative B would be long-term, minor, and beneficial, primarily as a result of improved conditions.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts, which would be the same as those described under the no-action alternative, would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial because of three rehabilitated venues and a new venue south of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The impacts of alternative B would be long-term, major, and beneficial. These impacts, in combination with the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, would result in long-term, major, beneficial cumulative impacts, with a substantial beneficial contribution from alternative B.

Conclusion

Taken as a whole, alternative B would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts because of changes in the permitting, scheduling, and management process; more sustainable venues in highly desirable locations; conveniently located civic infrastructure to facilitate event operations; permanent visitor facilities such as restrooms; a redesigned Union Square that could accommodate larger crowds; a flexible multipurpose space at the Sylvan Theater location; and a new venue at Constitution Gardens. The impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions combined with the impacts of the preferred alternative would result in long-term, major, beneficial cumulative impacts, with a substantial beneficial contribution from alternative B.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE C

Direct and Indirect Impacts

Existing and proposed venues under alternative C for demonstrations and special events are shown on the Civic Stage plan map.

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Participants

Under alternative C the National Mall could accommodate about 215,000 more people than under the no-action alternative because capacities would be increased at the following venue:

- *Union Square* — 290,000 people (3 sq. ft. / person) with a smaller reflecting pool that could be drained for special events; this is nearly triple the current capacity of 100,000.
- *Tidal Basin walks* — 50,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), double the current capacity due to wider walks.

Maximum capacities at the following venues would be the same as the no-action alternative, except that the Mall elm tree panels could not be used during special events:

- *Mall center panels* — 500,000 (3 sq. ft. / person), plus an additional 80,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) in the elm tree panels during First Amendment demonstrations only
- *Washington Monument grounds* — 700,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *Lincoln Memorial* — 7,000 (7 sq. ft. / person) with an additional 90,000 along the reflecting pool (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *JFK hockey fields* — 60,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *West Potomac Park ballfields / polo grounds* — 220,000 (7 sq. ft. / person)
- *Tidal Basin parking area* — 5,000 (3 sq. ft. / person)
- *D.C. War Memorial area* — 425 (10 sq. ft. / person)
- *Jefferson Memorial steps and plaza* — 4,000 (50 sq. ft. / person)

Impact on demonstration and event participants participate would be long-term, major, and beneficial, primarily as a result of redesigning Union Square so it could accommodate many more people.

Civic Stage — Alternative C

Impacts on Demonstration and Event Organizers

Permitting, Scheduling, and Management Processes

Under alternative C, similar to the other action alternatives, the event permitting process would be revamped with on-line access to apply for a permit. The public and organizers would be able to go on-line and check venue availability and capacity, as well as explore venue facilities, requirements, and general information. Event standards would be defined for each venue, helping ensure the protection of park resources and facilitating setup/takedown operations for organizers. Under alternative C event scheduling (not First Amendment demonstrations) would ensure that part of the Mall's grass panels would be open for public recreation at all times, part available for events, and part available for landscape recovery/restoration.

Staff would be dedicated to providing consistent support and monitoring. Organizers would be

encouraged to use venues with a meaningful association with their group and that would be suited to their needs. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts under alternative C on event permitting, scheduling, and management would be long-term, major, and beneficial.

Venues

Under alternative C, similar to the preferred alternative and alternative B, the venues for demonstrations and special events would be improved, with long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts. As described in the preferred alternative, sustainable venues would be attractive to organizers, and more frequent but smaller scale restoration projects would mean that venues would stay in better shape and that more space would be available to organizers.

To maximize sustainability, organizers would be encouraged to pursue nontraditional approaches to expand participation. For example,

demonstrations of unity could be simulcast from several locations, rather than having all participants onsite, similar to the 2007 Live Earth concerts that took place around the world. The Kennedy Center periodically simulcasts performances taking place in their auditoriums to audiences on the National Mall. These special events have been very popular.

Organizers would be encouraged to provide transportation to venues and would be required to provide bicycle parking for events of more than 2,000 people. Similar to alternative A, no eye-level obstructions of planned historic vistas would be allowed, requiring changes to event facility locations, a long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impact on organizers. Compared to the no-action alternative, overall alternative C would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts to organizers. Impacts at specific sites are discussed below.

Union Square. Under alternative C Union Square would provide an attractive, sustainable destination with flexible event and demonstration space that would maximize sustainable building practices. Context-sensitive design would include more paved surfaces and the elimination of grade changes to make the space more flexible and accessible to all people; a year-round water feature that could be drained for additional event space or that could be frozen for winter ice-skating; event utility infrastructure and connections, with the ability to view simulcasts or broadcasts of demonstrations and events occurring elsewhere, or to broadcast free-speech or civic activities from here; and a convenient refreshment stand for use by organizers. Self-cleaning public restrooms would be provided, but organizers would still have to provide additional portable restrooms for large events. As a result, Union Square would provide a venue that would almost double the number of potential participants. Impacts under alternative C would be long-term, major, and beneficial compared to the no-action alternative.

The Mall. Under alternative C the Mall would be recognized as a venue that must accommodate very high levels of use and yet be able to recover quickly, similar to the preferred alternative. Actions would include improved circulation and off-Mall pedestrian connections, re-

placement of gravel pathways, better orientation and wayfinding, areas to accommodate operational and logistical needs, permanent utility and communication connections, and two large permanent restrooms plus designated areas for additional portable restrooms. The Mall's improved appearance and facilities would enhance its desirability for organizers. These changes would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts for organizers compared to the no-action alternative.

Like the preferred alternative and alternative A, no events would be allowed to use areas within the elm tree panels for activities or temporary event facilities such as tents and stages. The tree panels would continue to be available for demonstrations that require all available space and by general visitors for relaxation and recreation. The impact on the event organizers that use these areas would be long-term, major, and adverse. However, the resulting improvement in the appearance of the Mall for other event organizers would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial. Alternative C would require some event organizers to reorganize their layout plans.

Washington Monument Grounds. As described for the no-action alternative, the Washington Monument grounds would continue to host a wide variety of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events because of the large open turf areas that can be flexibly used. Temporary facilities such as portable restrooms, stages and related backstage areas, and first-aid stations would be provided.

The Sylvan Theater would continue to see high levels of use for all sizes of events despite the awkward orientation of the theater to circulation patterns and hillside seating. Because the theater stage does not provide many of the desired amenities, organizers might need to provide temporary upgrades for sound and lighting systems.

The northeast, northwest, and southwest corners of the north portion of the main grounds would continue to be used as venues for stages and event facilities, and temporary utility connections would continue to be provided by organizers. Temporary event facilities, such as tents, would continue to occasionally block the planned historic view between the White House

and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Impacts under alternative C would be long-term, minor to moderate, and adverse because no changes would be made to event infrastructure.

Constitution Gardens. Constitution Gardens would be developed as a visitor destination with nearby performance space under alternative C, similar to the preferred alternative and alternative B. Circulation would be improved in a way to provide space for small special events or demonstrations, and infrastructure would be provided, making the area more desirable for organizers of small events. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial.

Lincoln Memorial. Under alternative C the east plaza and lower approachway to the Lincoln Memorial would continue to be a desirable venue for small to large demonstrations and events. Demonstrations and special events would continue to be managed according to updated *Guidelines for Special Events and Demonstrations* to protect cultural resources.

As described for the no-action alternative, activities would continue to be primarily located on paved surfaces, with the memorial stairs and lower approachway providing informal seating. Turf areas along the reflecting pool would also continue to be used. Organizers would have to consider providing shuttle transportation because the nearest Metro station is 0.75 mile away. Impacts would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial, the same as the no-action alternative.

West Potomac Park Riverfront. Under alternative C the West Potomac Park riverfront area would continue to attract a number of special events, many of which are athletic in nature. Charity walks, runs, and races would continue to use roads in the area or the athletic fields as staging areas. Parking would be improved along Ohio Drive, and separate bicycle lanes or routes would be provided to enhance access. Compared to the no-action alternative, alternative C would result in long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on the attractiveness of venues to organizers, primarily as the result of the improved appearance of natural resources, separate bicycle routes or lanes, and revised parking along Ohio Drive.

Tidal Basin. The Tidal Basin would continue to be an attractive location for special events. It would remain the center of the highly attended annual National Cherry Blossom Festival, but would also continue to be available for other activities. The Tidal Basin would be more desirable as an event venue under alternative C, similar to the preferred alternative, because of widened walks, separate bicycle lanes, improved pedestrian connections, revised parking, better visitor facilities (permanent restrooms, food service), pedestrian lighting, and more choice in recreation equipment rentals. Management changes made for the 2008 Cherry Blossom Festival would continue, including closing the parking lot to accommodate temporary facilities and providing shuttles to parking areas in East Potomac Park. The impacts to the attractiveness of the Tidal Basin as a venue under alternative C, compared to the no-action alternative, would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of numerous improvements to visitor facilities.

Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Under alternative C the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza would continue to be a desirable venue for organizers of demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events because of opportunities for informal seating and performance areas, with vistas to the White House and the U.S. Capitol from areas on the plaza and steps. Utility connections on the plaza would continue to be available to organizers. The large paved plaza and wide walks near the memorial would still provide flexible space for temporary event facilities. As a result of operation changes made in 2008, organizers are encouraged to locate stages so they do not block views between the memorial and the White House. Nearby parking for 300 vehicles within a five-minute walk would remain, but the 15- to 20-minute walk from the nearest Metro station would mean that event organizers might want to provide shuttle transportation. The continued need to control access would be inconvenient. Compared to the no-action alternative, impacts under alternative C would be long-term, minor, and beneficial because of improved conditions.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts would be the same as those described under the no-action alternative. The

impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions would be long-term, moderate, and beneficial because of three rehabilitated existing venues and a new venue south of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. These impacts, in combination with the long-term, major, beneficial impacts of alternative C, would result in long-term, major, beneficial cumulative impacts, with a substantial beneficial contribution from alternative C.

Conclusion

The overall impacts of alternative C on participants and organizers for demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of changes in the permitting, scheduling, and

management process, additional and more sustainable venues in highly desirable locations; conveniently located civic infrastructure to facilitate event operations; permanent visitor facilities such as restrooms; a redesigned Union Square that could accommodate larger crowds; a reoriented Sylvan Theater to improve viewing from the hillside; and a new venue at Constitution Gardens. However, impacts on the few organizers who could no longer use the elm tree panels on the Mall for temporary event facilities (such as tents and stages) would be long-term, major, and adverse. The impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions combined with the impacts of alternative C would result in long-term, major, beneficial cumulative impacts, with a substantial beneficial contribution from alternative C.