



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES PARK POLICE
1100 Ohio Dr. SW
Washington, DC 20242

June 4, 2025

Memorandum

To: Superintendent Kevin Greiss
National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park Service

From: Major Frank Hilsher *Major Frank Hilsher*
Commander, Icon Protection Branch
U. S. Park Police

Subject: Dupont Circle Closure Request – June 5-8, 2025

This Memorandum supplements a prior memorandum I prepared on the same subject dated May 22, 2025.

On April 22, 2025, the DC Metropolitan Police Department, through Chief Pamela Smith, requested in writing a full park closure with “anti-scale” fencing of Dupont Circle for the duration of the World Pride 2025 festival being held in Washington, DC from June 5 through June 9, 2025. Chief Smith’s request letter stated, in part:

“Over the years, Dupont Circle Park has been a popular location for Pride attendees to congregate, despite not being a sanctioned Pride event. In the past five years the Metropolitan Police Department and United States Park Police have taken proactive steps, including increased police presence and enhanced lighting around the park. However, significant challenges persisted, including unpermitted large gathering with sound equipment, illegal vending and grilling, alcohol use, multiple physical altercations, and vandalism of the historic fountain and statue.

Every year, the situation has strained our personnel as the large crowds continued to linger around the park and spill into the nearby roadway causing further disturbances. To address this, the Metropolitan Police Department, United States Park Police, and other law enforcement partners have maintained a constant presence at Dupont Circle and the surrounding areas. This effort has restricted our capacity to support other Capital Pride festivities and respond to calls for service.”

On June 3, 2025, DC Metropolitan Police Department, through Chief Pamela Smith, rescinded the aforementioned closure request in writing citing the reason, “...after hearing from community leaders and residents, I am formally withdrawing MPD’s request to close Dupont Circle Park and the installation of anti-scale fencing around its perimeter from Thursday, June 5, 2025, through Monday, June 9, 2025.”

Chief Smith's letter to rescind this request does not provide any remedy or solutions to the significant amount of criminal activity and resource destruction that has historically been committed in Dupont Circle Park during DC Pride weekend, or the large strain on law enforcement resources that would be remedied by a park closure with anti-scale fence. This second letter in fact further provides additional information that continues to support a full park closure to combat criminal behavior and to protect NPS resources which states, in part:

“Historically, there have been significant challenges in Dupont Circle Park after formal Pride events have concluded.

- In 2019, during Pride weekend, an individual was arrested in Dupont Circle Park after gunshots were heard in the park, causing people to flee the area believing there may have been an active shooter.
- In 2023, the National Park Service reported that following the Pride weekend events, the Dupont Circle Park was vandalized resulting in approximately \$175,000 in damage to the historic fountain.
- In 2024, during the evening hours large groups of juveniles entered Dupont Circle Park and engaged in unpermitted and illegal activities, including drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, and engaging in fights. Groups of juveniles also left the park and ran into a local business and stole items.

Over the years the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) has deployed large numbers of officers to the Dupont Circle Park and surrounding area to support the United States Park Police (USPP) and deter illegal activity in the area. This includes closing the traffic circle around Dupont Park due to large crowds that overflow in the roadway and deploying officers on foot and bicycles to maintain order in the Dupont Circle Park.”

I continue to completely concur with Chief Smith's first assessment and the facts relayed in her second assessment that support the need for a closure, and I continue to request a full park closure of Dupont Circle with anti-scale fence from June 5-8, 2025. While some community leaders and residents have voiced their concerns for a closure of Dupont Circle to MPD the threat of violence, criminal acts and NPS resource destruction has only increased since MPD's original April 22, 2025 park closure request.

Open-source intelligence reporting has identified a local DJ advertising and selling tickets to an unpermitted gathering/party in Dupont Circle following World Pride events. This event is not sanctioned by the official World Pride organization and has not separately applied for a permit that would enable the NPS to manage the event in such a way that it protects attendees, bystanders, and the cultural resources in Dupont Circle. This social media advertisement is stating that this is the same DJ and “party” as the previous several years, which have resulted in the unsafe conditions and damages recounted above.

In order to adequately protect visitors as well as Dupont Circle's historic structures and resources, the USPP maintains their request for a Record of Determination (ROD) to enact a full park closure of Dupont Circle from Thursday, June 5, 2025 to Sunday, June 8, 2025 with “anti-scale” fencing along the outer-most sidewalk of the circle. This closure request is based solely on several previous years of assaultive, destructive and disorderly behavior exhibited in Dupont Circle during the DC Pride weekend as well as the aforementioned promotion of the same party

this year; the USPP maintains that a physical barrier effecting a full closure of Dupont Circle is necessary to “secure the park, deter potential violence, reduce the risk of destructive acts and decrease the need for extensive law enforcement presences,” and is consistent with applicable legislation and Federal administrative policies. Other options such as increased law-enforcement presence without closing the park would not be feasible or effective to protect visitors and resources, as has been demonstrated from the violence and destruction in past years, and given the number of other calls on emergency response and law enforcement that will be occurring around the same time this year. The USPP has therefore determined, and hereby advises, that such action is necessary for the maintenance of public health and safety, protection of environmental or scenic values, protection of natural or cultural resources and the avoidance of conflict among visitor use activities.

CC: Regional Director Jen Nersesian, Deputy Regional Director Lisa Mendelson