

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Mall and Memorial Parks  
Washington, D.C.

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**Draft**

**National Mall Plan /  
Environmental Impact Statement**

## **Thank You**

The National Park Service is deeply grateful for the level of interest in planning for the National Mall. Nearly 30,000 Americans and others have helped to this point by providing ideas, statements of concern, and helpful comments. We appreciate your comments and have considered them in the development of the alternatives presented in this document.

## **Cooperating Agencies and Participants**

The following governmental entities were cooperating agencies or otherwise participated in the planning process:

- Architect of the Capitol
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- D.C. Department of Transportation
- D.C. Historic Preservation Office
- D.C. Office of Planning
- Federal Reserve
- General Services Administration
- Military District of Washington
- National Archives and Records Administration
- National Capital Planning Commission
- National Gallery of Art
- Smithsonian Institution
- United States Park Police
- U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing
- U.S. Commission of Fine Arts
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Defense, Arlington National Cemetery
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U. S Holocaust Memorial Museum
- U.S. Secret Service
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

# Draft

## National Mall Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

### The National Mall

#### Washington, D.C.

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#### Abstract

This *Draft Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* presents five alternatives for the management of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The no-action alternative would continue current conditions, and the preferred alternative is the National Park Service's proposed approach for meeting the plan's purpose and need. Under all alternatives cultural resources would be preserved and protected, and citizens would continue to be able to express their First Amendment rights on the National Mall. The intent of the preferred alternative is to establish a sense of place and an overall identity for the National Mall, creating a coherent pedestrian environment that would complement and balance the natural environment, formal and informal features, and national commemorative works. Alternatives A, B, and C each focus on one primary aspect of the park's purpose and significance — alternative A would focus on the historic landscape with its memorials and planned vistas; alternative B on creating a welcoming national civic space for public gatherings, events, and high-use levels; and alternative C on urban recreation and use plus a sustainable urban ecology. The preferred alternative combines ideas from all of the other alternatives considered.

Impacts were analyzed for cultural resources (including impacts on memorials and cultural landscapes); natural resources (impacts on water resources, soils, vegetation, and fish and wildlife); demonstrations, special events, and national celebrations (impacts on participants and organizers); access and circulation (impacts on visitor access, the pedestrian environment, bicycle users, and motorists); visitor experience (impacts on a quality visitor experience; opportunities for information, education, enjoyment, recreation; visitor facilities and amenities; public health and safety; and user capacity); socioeconomic environment (impacts of increased visitation, impacts on commercial business and construction opportunities); and park operations (impacts on park conditions, safe and efficient operations, and sustainability). Continuing existing conditions under the no-action alternative would generally result in the greatest level of adverse impacts on cultural resources, natural resources, national celebrations and special events, access and circulation, the visitor experience, and park operations. Continued impacts on soils and vegetation could become unacceptable as a result of long-term, major, adverse impacts on the American elm trees on the Mall. Actions under the preferred alternative and alternatives A, B, and C would all address adverse impacts to varying degrees, with the most beneficial impacts under the preferred alternative and alternative B for all categories. Venues and amenities for participants in demonstrations would be improved under the preferred alternative and alternatives B and C. The preferred alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative in terms of satisfying the goals of the National Environmental Policy Act.

This *Draft Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* will be on review for 90 days. Comments may be submitted through the Internet at [www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan](http://www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan) or by mail to

National Mall and Memorial Parks  
ATTN: National Mall Plan  
900 Ohio Dr. SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment — including your personal identifying information — may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

## The National Mall in Washington, D.C.

This *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* presents a vision about the kinds of resource conditions, visitor experiences, and facilities that would best fulfill the purposes of the National Mall. The National Mall stretches west from the U.S. Capitol to the Potomac River, and north from the Thomas Jefferson Memorial to Constitution Avenue. (The White House and President's Park, which are north of Constitution Avenue, are managed by the National Park Service as a separate unit of the national park system.) While the National Mall is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, multiple governmental agencies and organizations have jurisdiction over lands and roads within and adjacent to the National Mall, including the Architect of the Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, the Department of Agriculture, the General Services Administration, the District of Columbia, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. In addition, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, and the D.C. Historic Preservation Office have consultation, planning, review, and in some cases approval authority for issues related to planning, historic preservation, commemorative works, and design.

*All of these agencies and organizations and others have cooperated with the National Park Service in the development of this plan for the National Mall. There has been an ongoing exchange of ideas, goals, best practices, advice, and concerns as alternatives were developed. Once a plan has been approved, future implementation plans will generally include standard procedures for site-specific design, commission reviews, public engagement, and historic preservation consultation.*

## A Guide to this Document

This *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* is organized in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's "Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act" and *NPS Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-making*. Because of the complexity of the issues addressed and the number of alternatives considered, this statement is longer than what is recommended in the CEQ regulations. Below is an outline of the document:

- The **Summary**, beginning on the next page, highlights the purpose of and need for a plan, the alternatives being considered, the environmental impacts of the alternatives, and the next steps in the planning process.
- The **Purpose of and Need for Action** (beginning on page 3) describes the context for the plan, including the National Mall's purpose and significance; opportunities, problems, and challenges addressed in the plan; environmental impact topics that are being considered, as well as those that have been dismissed; and interrelationships with other plans and projects.
- The **Alternatives** section (page 49) describes the five alternatives that are being considered, as well as actions that were considered but dismissed. This section concludes with a discussion of the environmentally preferred alternative, a table showing how well each alternative meets plan objectives, a detailed table showing all actions considered in the alternatives, and a summary of environmental consequences.
- The **Affected Environment** (page 249) describes existing conditions for all impact topics that are being analyzed.
- The **Environmental Consequences** (page 355) analyze the effects that each alternative would have on cultural resources; natural resources; demonstrations, events, and national celebrations; access and circulation; visitor experiences; the socioeconomic environment; and park operations.
- The **Consultation and Coordination** section (page 541) describes the process that has been used to involve the public, as well as agencies and organizations, throughout the planning process. Cultural resource consultation and stakeholder and informational briefings are also listed, along with agencies and organizations who will be reviewing the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*.
- The **Appendixes, Glossary, Selected Bibliography, and Index** (page 553) provide supporting information.

## SUMMARY

The National Mall in Washington, D.C., stretches west from the U.S. Capitol to the Potomac River, and north from the Thomas Jefferson Memorial to Constitution Avenue. This highly recognizable space, which is managed by the National Park Service, is the home to the Washington Monument, the Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson memorials, and numerous other memorials that commemorate great Americans and significant events in our nation's history. Adjacent to the National Mall are national museums and galleries that form the country's cultural center. In 2003 Congress stated that the National Mall is a "substantially completed work of civic art" and that no new or unapproved memorials or visitor centers would be added. Congress also directed the National Park Service, as the responsible federal agency, to begin planning for the future of the National Mall to protect its character.

### PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

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#### Plan Purpose

The purpose of this planning effort is to prepare a long-term plan that will restore the National Mall so that it may continue to symbolize the ideals and greatness envisioned for the United States of America. The approved plan will be followed by site-specific implementation plans that will detail how to achieve the plan objectives. Additional compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act will be completed as needed for specific implementation plans. As a result, this will be a multiyear and multidisciplinary planning effort. Certain actions may require congressional authorization or revision of federal or park regulations.

#### Need for the Plan

The National Mall covers approximately 684 acres, but in 2008 it received approximately 22.3 million visits. This is more than twice the number of annual visits reported for large national parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Canyon combined. Accommodating this level of

use and balancing all types of activities within this limited area present enormous challenges.

The National Mall must function efficiently and flexibly at many levels — as the highly symbolic visual setting for our government; as part of the city's circulation and transportation network; as the location of the nation's primary memorials and museums; and as the stage for First Amendment demonstrations, national celebrations, and regional and local special events. The demands on the National Mall are constant and wide-ranging. Each year the National Park Service receives over 6,000 applications for public gathering permits, resulting in around 3,000 events.

The wear and tear of concentrated activity affects the landscape and visitor experiences. Facilities can be overwhelmed with use. Vegetation cannot easily recover, and lawns may be worn to the ground and soils heavily compacted, which

THE MALL — JULY 2009



The Mall looking east from the Washington Monument.

in turn adversely affects the vigor of trees and other vegetation. Many walks are not wide enough for current levels of use, and adjacent areas may be damaged when use spills off walks or when people choose a more direct route. The combined effects generate heartfelt complaints by visitors about the deteriorated appearance of the National Mall.

The National Mall must be refurbished so that (1) its treasured memorials and historic landscapes can be preserved, (2) very high levels of use can be sustained, and (3) the needs of visitors can be met. The National Mall plan must determine how to

- improve resource conditions; establish a standard of quality that invites respect and generates stewardship; and raise the standard of care and maintenance
- prepare for intensive levels of use for First Amendment demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events
- provide desired experiences, such as opportunities for education, contemplation, rest, relaxation, recreation, entertainment, and social experiences
- address user capacity, which for this plan is defined as the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining desired resource conditions and visitor experiences on the National Mall
- provide for the physical needs, enjoyment, and convenience of visitors and park users, including information, restrooms, food, retail, drinking water, and access

#### THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT AND THE TIDAL BASIN



The Washington Monument is a focal point at night, as well as during the day.

## Foundation for the Plan

Planning and management for the National Mall are based on the legal purposes of the area, its significance, its fundamental resources and values, and its primary interpretive themes. These elements establish a foundation for planning and management so that everyone has a shared understanding of what is most important about the National Mall, as well as the constraints of special mandates on planning and management. All alternatives must be consistent with and contribute to fulfilling the park's purpose, significance, and mandates. The park purpose, as defined through historic plans, legislation, judicial cases, and NPS policy, is discussed on page 9 of the main document, and park significance on page 10. The plan objectives (see page 4 of the document) take into account the National Mall's purpose and significance, as well as legislative requirements, NPS management policies, best management practices, and planning principles developed in cooperation with other federal and city agencies.

## Legal Considerations

Laws, regulations, and authorities that govern the management of the National Mall include those that are applicable to all national park system areas and to the National Park Service as a federal agency.

**First Amendment Jurisprudence.** Governmental regulation of demonstrations and related sales activities is subject to First Amendment jurisprudence. Demonstrations are legally consistent with the special nature and sanctity of the National Mall, and they will continue under all alternatives.

**Regulating Public Use.** The *Code of Federal Regulations* addresses public use limits, which the park superintendent may establish based on a determination that limits are "necessary for the maintenance of public health and safety, protection of environmental and scenic values, protection of natural and cultural resources, . . . or implementation of management responsibilities, equitable allocation and use of facilities, or the avoidance of conflict among visitor use activities" (36 CFR 1.5). Regulations at 36 CFR 7.96 contain provisions specific to the greater

**A FIRST AMENDMENT DEMONSTRATION AT UNION SQUARE**



Demonstrations are legally consistent with the special nature and sanctity of the National Mall, and they will continue under all alternatives.

Washington, D.C., area and figure prominently in the administration of the National Mall.

**Demonstrations and Special Events.** Public gatherings or demonstrations on the National Mall involving more than 25 people generally require a permit issued by the National Park Service. To preserve an atmosphere of calm, tranquility, and reverence, demonstrations or special events are not allowed in certain memorial areas. These areas include specific portions of the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (36 CFR 7.96(g)(3)(ii)). Other regulations pertaining to demonstrations and special events, along with recreational activities, soliciting, and sales, are discussed in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (36 CFR 7.96).

**Planning and Development**

Unlike the planning and development of most areas of the national park system, other federal entities have review and in some cases approval authority for areas in Washington, D.C., including the National Mall. These entities are the National Capital Planning Commission and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. In addition to their authorities under the laws that established them, these commissions also have certain authorities under other laws, such as the Commemorative Works Act. Since 2003 this act has prohibited the addition of new memorials and visitor centers on the National Mall unless Congress had already approved them. Moreover,

Congress has generally reserved to itself certain authorities for the placement of structures on the National Mall and other federal lands in the District of Columbia.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Before work was begun to develop the alternatives presented in this *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, best management practices used by other organizations at comparable sites were researched to help determine how maintenance and operations for the National Mall could be improved. The review of best practices has been an ongoing process as alternatives were developed, and the most applicable practices have been included in the action alternatives.

**Public Involvement**

During this planning process nearly 30,000 Americans have shared their visions for the National Mall. They have said that America’s front yard is important for commemoration and celebration and as a gathering place for the expression of democratic rights. They have emphasized the importance of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; told us that the National Mall did not look good enough for what it means to our nation; reiterated its high significance and value to our country; proposed that the National Mall should be a role model for a green, sustainable, and high-quality public civic space; commented on what changes they would like to see and what should not be changed; told us what they liked and did not like about the alternatives; suggested a great many alternative ideas; offered their support and wanted to know how they could help; and reminded us that the National Mall belongs to us all. All of these comments helped guide the development of alternatives.

The various areas of the National Mall are described from east to west and from north to south. The major divisions are

- the Mall, which consists of Union Square (between 1st and 3rd streets) and the Mall (between 3rd and 14th streets)
- the Washington Monument and its grounds
- West Potomac Park

Because of its size, West Potomac is further divided into areas north and south of Independence Avenue. North of Independence Avenue are the World War II Memorial, Constitution Gardens, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial and grounds, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the D.C. War Memorial, and Ash Woods. South of Independence Avenue are the Tidal Basin area, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, the West Potomac Park riverfront, the George Mason Memorial, and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial and grounds. Actions are not proposed for all of the individual areas.

Five alternatives for the management of the National Mall are considered. The no-action alternative would continue current conditions, and the preferred alternative is the National Park Service's proposed approach for meeting the plan's purpose and need. Alternatives A, B, and C each focus on one primary aspect of the park's purpose and significance — alternative A would focus on the historic landscape with its memorials and planned vistas; alternative B on creating a welcoming national civic space for public gatherings, events, and high-use levels; and alternative C on urban recreation and use plus a sustainable urban ecology. The preferred alternative combines ideas from all of the other alternatives considered.

### **Actions Common to All Alternatives**

Actions that would be taken under all alternatives include the following:

- **Cultural Resources** — Historic properties and memorials would be preserved and protected. The D.C. Historic Preservation Office, along with other interested agencies, organizations, and groups, would be consulted in the preservation, restoration, adaptive reuse, or rehabilitation of any cultural resources. Historic landscapes, such as those at the Lincoln Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, would be preserved and protected.
- **Natural Resources** — Water quality problems in designed water features would continue to be addressed, soil and vegetation health would be managed to improve

### **Other Actions Common to All Alternatives**

Actions already authorized by Congress for the National Mall will continue, including construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. In the future memorials will be accommodated outside the Reserve, an area set aside by Congress that includes the National Mall, where generally no new memorials or visitor centers will be sited. New memorials will instead be considered for sites identified in the 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, which was produced by the National Capital Planning Commission working with the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Memorial Commission, which includes the National Park Service.

Five deferred maintenance projects have been funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. They include the Lincoln Reflecting Pool area (lower approachway, pool, and the north and south elm walks), the D.C. War Memorial, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plaza seawall, Ohio Drive, and Madison Drive.

Other projects are continuing. Construction documents for additions to the Potomac Park levee have been completed. Recommendations from the NPS 2006 *Visitor Transportation Study* will be implemented separately. Permanent security screening will be provided at the Washington Monument, and a security perimeter will be developed for the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. These projects are no longer considered in the alternatives; instead they are discussed as present or reasonably foreseeable projects under cumulative impacts.

appearance, and any threatened or endangered species would be protected. Cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers would be continued to comprehensively examine and address permanent solutions to hydrology and flood control.

- **First Amendment Demonstrations, National Celebrations, and Special Events** — The National Mall is the most prominent space in our country for the demonstration of First Amendment rights, and that is an essential purpose of the National Mall. Consistent with the First Amendment and federal regulations, demonstrations will continue to be fully accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the National Mall. Union Square, the Mall, the Washington Monument grounds, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial would all continue to be popular areas for demonstrations and

special events. Permit procedures would be improved, and monitoring procedures would be enhanced to ensure that resources are better protected and to reduce impacts to soil, turf, and vegetation.

- **Access and Circulation** — Pedestrian conditions would be improved, as well as links with public transit. Bicycle access and facilities would be improved in conjunction with the city’s *Bicycle Master Plan* and bike-sharing program; bicycle racks would continue to be added throughout the National Mall. Existing tour bus drop-off and pickup locations would be improved where possible. Tour bus parking would be addressed in cooperation with the D.C. Department of Transportation and other city agencies. The National Park Service would work with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to add National Mall to the name of the Smithsonian Metro station on the Mall.
- **Visitor Information, Orientation, and Enjoyment** — Current visitor information and educational programs would be continued, including guided walking and bicycle tours. Brochures, maps, and the park website would be improved. Opportunities for entertainment and recreation would also be continued. Hours at the Washington Monument would be extended to 10 p.m. to allow more people to visit.
- **Visitor Amenities** — Visitor facilities, such as restrooms, food service, bookstores, seating, and lighting, would continue to be provided. Park staff would continue to assess the need for and variety of appropriate commercial services, such as food service, retail, transportation, and recreation equipment rentals.
- **Health, Public Safety, and Security** — Park staff would continue to provide emergency medical services, as well as plan for the safety and security of visitors. The U.S. Park Police would continue to provide law enforcement services.
- **Park Operations** — Projects would be undertaken to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog. A visual quality team would continue to identify high-profile problems and concerns that would be

promptly addressed by a quick response team. In-park communication systems would be upgraded. A solid waste and recycling plan would be developed, incorporating best practices for collection, retrieval, storage, and hauling. Actions would be taken to help meet NPS energy goals, including energy-efficient light bulbs, sustainable forms of transportation (such as electric cars), and retrofitting water features to be sustainable. Partnerships and agreements to facilitate park management would be continued.

## **No-Action Alternative**

The no-action alternative describes existing conditions and the continuation of current management. It establishes the baseline to compare all the other alternatives.

### **The Mall**

**Union Square (1st to 3rd Streets).** The Ulysses S. Grant Memorial would be maintained, along with the historic features of the landscape. No facilities (such as seating, restrooms, or food service), infrastructure for demonstrations or special events, or information would be provided.

**The Mall (3rd to 14th Streets).** Compacted soils would remain, and half of the Mall would be rested every other winter for restoration. American elm trees would be protected as much as possible and replaced as needed. Gravel walkways would remain. A temporary visitor contact station at the Smithsonian Metro station would remain, as would four refreshments stands around the Mall.

### **Washington Monument and Grounds**

Food and retail services would be moved to a permanent location. The circular restroom near 15th Street and Independence Avenue SW, the newly renovated Monument Lodge (bookstore, ticketing, and restrooms), the Sylvan Theater, and Survey Lodge (visitor contact station) would all remain.

### ***West Potomac Park (North of Independence Avenue)***

No changes would be made at the World War II Memorial, Constitution Gardens, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or Ash Woods (restroom and U.S. Park Police facilities).

**Lincoln Memorial and Grounds.** Visitor restrooms inside the Lincoln Memorial would be expanded within the building footprint. No additional restrooms would be provided.

### ***West Potomac Park (South of Independence Avenue)***

No changes would be made at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, the George Mason Memorial, or the Thomas Jefferson Memorial.

**Tidal Basin Area.** The Tidal Basin area would continue to offer a pleasant strolling and viewing experience, and historic features would be maintained. Engineering studies would be undertaken to improve Tidal Basin flushing and to ensure seawall stability.

**West Potomac Park Riverfront.** The dry-laid stone river walls south of Memorial Bridge would be stabilized as needed with riprap.

### **The Preferred Alternative**

Under the preferred alternative the National Mall, as the premier civic space for our nation, would be refurbished so that very high levels of use could be perpetuated and the needs of visitors met in an energy-efficient and sustainable manner. Its memorials and landscapes would be protected, with large areas of open space as defining features of the historic landscape. The designed historic landscape would evolve, and its value over time would change, reflecting significant national events. Contemporary uses

would be accommodated while respecting the planned historic character and visions of the L'Enfant and McMillan plans. The intent would be to establish a sense of place and an overall identity for the National Mall, creating a rich, coherent pedestrian environment that would complement and balance the natural environment, the combination of formal and informal features, and national commemorative works. The National Mall would be emphasized as a year-round destination where the beauty and variety of every season would enhance visitor experiences.

Uses for First Amendment demonstrations, commemorations, and national ceremonies and celebrations would be emphasized. All visitors would be made to feel welcome through helpful wayfinding signs, knowledgeable staff, and high-quality and accessible facilities. Diverse opportunities would be offered for public enjoyment, including educational, cultural, and musical programs, as well as active and passive recreational activities.

Professionals would be engaged to design high-quality solutions to unify the National Mall and to articulate the visions for specific sites.

### ***The Mall***

**Union Square.** Some of the most important changes would be made at Union Square. A restored Ulysses S. Grant Memorial would be the focal point of a symmetrical and formally laid out civic square based on historical precedents. It would be a popular, active, and dignified day and evening destination, and it could be easily transformed into a larger venue for First Amendment demonstrations and events. The historic east-west vista between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument would be improved and perpetuated.

#### **A Vision for the National Mall — Enriching Your American Experience**

The National Mall — the great swath of green in the middle of our capital city and stretching from the foot of the United States Capitol to the Potomac River — is America's civic stage. This historic open space with its planned vistas provides an inspiring setting for national memorials, many of them symbols of our democracy. It also provides a visual connection between the branches of government, and a backdrop for government buildings and the great cultural institutions of our nation. For more than 200 years it has symbolized our nation and its democratic values, which have inspired the world. "We the People" come here to demonstrate our rights and celebrate our freedoms, our history and culture, our unity and diversity, and our way of life.

**UNION SQUARE AND THE CAPITOL REFLECTING POOL**



A smaller reflecting pool at Union Square would be considered under some alternatives to make the space more suited to various uses and to improve pedestrian circulation.

Design development would determine the size and character of visitor facilities and amenities. Infrastructure for events would be provided. A smaller reflecting pool could be considered to make the space more suited to various uses and reduce water use. Shade structures would provide for visitor comfort and create pleasant places for rest and relaxation. Facilities (located outside view corridors) could include a flexible, indoor / outdoor, multipurpose destination, where people could enjoy views of the Grant Memorial and the Capitol. Restrooms would be provided, along with drinking water and recreation equipment rentals.

**The Mall.** Lawns and elm trees would be improved and protected. Compacted soils would be removed and replaced with engineered soils capable of better withstanding intensive use. The elm tree panels would no longer be available for temporary event facilities, such as tents, facilities, and vehicles. An area south of the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden and north of the center grass panels, as well as the 12th Street axis, would be redesigned for high levels of use and to support event logistical, operational, and temporary facilities.

A paved welcome plaza at 12th Street and Jefferson Drive SW would include a visitor contact station, high-capacity public restrooms, multiple orientation maps, and a large tactile model or pavement map of the National Mall, along with shaded and group seating.

As part of a coordinated paving plan for the National Mall, gravel pathways would be paved

with a low-maintenance, sustainable, and universally accessible material to improve circulation, facilitate events, and maintain improved landscape conditions. Some north-south walks would be modified to accommodate demonstrations and special events, visitor amenities, or recreation. Subtle grading would maintain the appearance of continuous turf.

**Washington Monument and Grounds**

A new multipurpose facility on the Washington Monument grounds on the northwest corner of 15th Street and Independence Avenue would offer food service, retail, information, education, integrated exhibits, restrooms, and performance space. This pleasant location below the level of roads would allow a facility to be oriented to views of the monument and would help muffle traffic noise.

Views of the Washington Monument and the north-south vista between the Thomas Jefferson Memorial and the White House would be protected and improved.

Utility infrastructure would be provided on the grounds for demonstrations and special events.

**GRAVEL WALKS ON THE MALL**



Gravel pathways would be paved under the preferred alternative with a low-maintenance, sustainable, and universally accessible material.

The areas north and south of Independence Avenue would be better connected through improved pedestrian circulation, including access to the southwest waterfront and East Potomac Park. A system of separate dedicated bike trails would be constructed.

Survey Lodge would be adaptively reused for services and parking for visitors with disabilities, information, exhibits about the building's history, and possibly recreation equipment rentals (such as bicycles and kites). Monument Lodge would continue to provide visitor services and restrooms.

### ***West Potomac Park (North of Independence Avenue)***

**Constitution Gardens.** Constitution Gardens would be a restful, high-quality, multipurpose visitor destination that would provide food service and opportunities for entertainment and enjoyment, as well as a place to relax as visitors tour the National Mall. The lake would be rebuilt to be self-sustainable, with potentially a nonpotable, sustainable water source. Urban recreational activities, such as fishing or model boating, would be offered.

A multipurpose facility would be located in the paved asphalt area at the east end of the lake. Food service, restrooms, education, exhibits, information, a bookstore, retail, recreation equipment rentals (model boats, portable lawn chairs), and space for partner activities would be provided. A flexible performance space, stage, or gazebo would be located in or near the east end of the lake and would take advantage of the nearby rolling terrain to accommodate an audience of several thousand. The historic canal Lockkeeper's House could be relocated away from the corner of 17th and Constitution Avenue NW and adaptively reused.

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial.** Additional seating would be provided in the vicinity of the memorial for contemplation and rest.

**Lincoln Memorial and Grounds.** Restrooms within the Lincoln Memorial would be expanded within the building footprint. A ceremonial use would be developed for the Watergate steps. An architecturally compatible rest-

**EAST PLAZA AT CONSTITUTION GARDENS**



A large paved area at the east end of Constitution Gardens could accommodate a multipurpose visitor service facility.

room would be added in the vicinity of the south refreshment stand.

**Korean War Veterans Memorial.** On the west side of the memorial the walks would be widened to accommodate changing circulation patterns and group visitation.

**Ash Woods.** The U.S. Park Police stables would be rebuilt and the area redesigned to be compatible with the historic character and quality of the National Mall. The paddocks would be made part of the visitor experience, with educational exhibits about the Park Police and horse patrols.

The Ash Woods restrooms would be replaced by a new restroom nearer the stables. Food service could be provided near the new restroom if warranted by increased visitation.

### ***West Potomac Park (South of Independence Avenue)***

**Tidal Basin Area.** A sense of arrival at the Tidal Basin would be created by redesigning pedestrian circulation and parking. Around the Tidal Basin high-quality recreational experiences would be provided for strolling, sightseeing, bicycling, and boating. Pedestrian lighting would be installed in a manner that would not impact the evening lighting ambience of memorials.

Based on engineering recommendations, the Tidal Basin seawalls would be rebuilt above tide-water. The historic appearance would be retained while accommodating wider walks and improving bicycling/vehicular circulation and safety. The Tidal Basin would be slightly smaller,

primarily in the southeast area, to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation.

A system of separate bicycle lanes or trails would be developed. Walks for pedestrians and bicyclists would be widened and separated near Inlet, Outlet, and Kutz bridges.

The recreation equipment rental facility and refreshment stand on the northeast side of the basin would be replaced. These functions, along with restrooms and seating, would be provided in new structures in the same general location.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.** New visitor use patterns would be assessed, particularly after the new Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial opens. A small food service and restroom facility could be provided near Ohio Drive, if warranted by demand.

**West Potomac Park Riverfront.** Where feasible, a sustainable, vegetated shoreline would be established along the Potomac River. In other areas stone-faced walls would provide space for seating, fishing, and enjoyment of the river or perhaps nodes for water taxi service or for launching small, hand-carried watercraft (such as canoes or kayaks). Walks would be improved and additional seating provided. Bicycle lanes or trails would be developed along Ohio Drive.

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial and Grounds.** The adjacent seawalls would be restored or rehabilitated, as recommended by engineering studies. No special event stage, roof, or walls would be allowed to obstruct the view to the White House from the north plaza. The parking

AREA SOUTH OF THE THOMAS JEFFERSON MEMORIAL



The former parking area south of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial could be redesigned to accommodate a security perimeter, as well as demonstrations and special events.

area south of the memorial would be redesigned to accommodate demonstrations and special events. Utilities would be provided.

Bicycle lanes or trails would be provided for safer or improved access near the memorial and to the I-395 bridges. Perimeter security and vehicular access would be completed. The refreshment stand would be rebuilt, and restrooms, seating, and tables would be provided.

## Alternative A — Focus on the Historic Landscape and Education

Alternative A would restore and maintain the resources of the National Mall as a historic landscape. Under this concept the designed historic landscape would evolve and its value over time would change, reflecting significant national events. Contemporary uses would be accommodated while respecting the planned historic character and visions of the L’Enfant and McMillan plans.

### The Mall

**Union Square.** The Ulysses S. Grant Memorial would be restored and would be the focal point of a redesigned civic square that would incorporate rehabilitated historic landscape components. A redesigned reflecting pool would offer opportunities to interpret the former Washington City Canal and the history of the U.S. Botanic Garden site. Walks would be widened to facilitate public access and maintenance. Seating would be added.

**The Mall.** The Mall would be rehabilitated to improve conditions, with soils being augmented or replaced for better turf and tree growing conditions. Gravel walks would be retained and refurbished. Edging or curbs would be installed to limit gravel migration, along with post-and-chain fencing to prevent social trails.

Infrastructure would be provided for demonstrations and events. No temporary event facilities, tents, stages, or vehicles would be allowed in the elm tree panels. Event organizers would be encouraged not to install temporary event facilities, such as tents, directly in the center of the major view corridor between the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument. Efforts would be made to remove vehicle parking on the

**ULYSSES S. GRANT MEMORIAL**

The memorial would be restored under the preferred alternative and alternatives A, B, and C.

north-south cross streets within the east-west viewshed.

A visitor contact station would continue to be provided near the Smithsonian Metro station. To restore the historic scene, the carousel would be removed. Small restroom facilities would be constructed near existing refreshment stands and would have a similar architectural style.

***Washington Monument and Grounds***

A high-quality indoor facility for visitor services would be provided on the monument grounds between 14th and 15th streets. This facility would be partially underground and would have a grass roof so as to blend into the landscape.

***West Potomac Park (North of Independence Avenue)***

**Constitution Gardens.** The lake would be reconstructed to be self-sustaining for plants, but fish would be removed. Walks would be repaved, and the refreshment stand and restrooms would be replaced. The visibility and appearance

of the Lockkeeper's House, which would remain in its current location, would be improved.

**Lincoln Memorial and Grounds.** The restrooms inside the Lincoln Memorial would be expanded within the building footprint. To help restore a more historic scene, the south ramp cloverleaf from Memorial Bridge to Rock Creek Parkway would be removed, and traffic would be redirected to 23rd Street SW.

**Ash Woods.** The Ash Woods restroom would be replaced, and the U.S. Park Police stables would be renovated.

***West Potomac Park (South of Independence Avenue)***

**Tidal Basin Area.** The Tidal Basin area would be upgraded with paved walks and facilities to enhance strolling and viewing experiences. The basin walls would be rebuilt in their current location to be above tidewater. Soil conditions would be improved, social trail development thwarted, and erosion and soil compaction under trees addressed. Traffic lanes on the historic Kutz Bridge would be reconfigured to widen pedestrian walks on the south side.

Visitor facilities would be redesigned to reduce congestion and to blend with the historic character of the National Mall. New recreation equipment rental and refreshment facilities would be provided, and restrooms would be added.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.** Periodic comprehensive condition assessments would be completed.

**West Potomac Park Riverfront.** The dry-laid stone river walls would be restored.

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial and Grounds.** No additional actions would be undertaken.

**Alternative B — Focus on a Welcoming National Civic Space for Public Gatherings, Events, and High-Use Levels**

Alternative B would improve the National Mall as the premier civic space for our nation and would support very high use levels. The evolving

ceremonial, celebratory, cultural, and visitor uses at this national civic space would be emphasized. Diverse peoples would be welcomed through multilingual educational opportunities, and the needs of large groups (including those arriving by tour bus), demonstrators, and event participants would be met.

Some areas would be redesigned to provide a more sustainable civic forum and stage for First Amendment demonstrations and other events.

**The Mall**

**Union Square.** A restored Ulysses S. Grant Memorial would be the focal point of a dignified, paved urban civic square that would be redesigned to highlight vistas, meet event needs, be a visitor destination, and offer comfort, convenience, and entertainment. The reflecting pool would be removed, and the square would be redesigned to increase space for demonstrations and special events, including utility infrastructure. A multipurpose visitor destination facility with food service, restrooms, retail, and performance space would be developed.

**The Mall.** The Mall would be rehabilitated and redesigned as a highly visible, sustainable venue with more hard surfaces for very high levels of use (demonstrations, public gatherings, cultural programs, and other civic events). Its critical historic features would be maintained.

A decorative and interactive water feature would be added at the 8th Street cross axis, a site identified in the McMillan plan. Some temporary

event facilities, such as tents, stages, and vehicles, could be located in the elm tree panels if turf/root zones and soils could be protected through an acceptable and authorized method. If determined feasible by engineering, security, geotechnical, and economic studies, an underground facility for paid visitor parking would be constructed between 12th and 15th streets, which would be entered from 15th Street.

Gravel walkways would be repaved with a universally accessible surface as part of a coordinated Mall paving plan. Surfaces would be provided in other areas to facilitate events and to maintain improved landscape conditions. Some walks would be widened, and some turf areas would be paved to create event venues.

A visitor contact station would continue to be provided near the Smithsonian Metro stop, where a custom-designed, covered entry would be constructed. A large tactile model of the National Mall would be developed, and a restroom would also be provided. Interactive water features would be installed in some locations. Small restroom facilities near existing refreshment stands would be constructed in a similar architectural style.

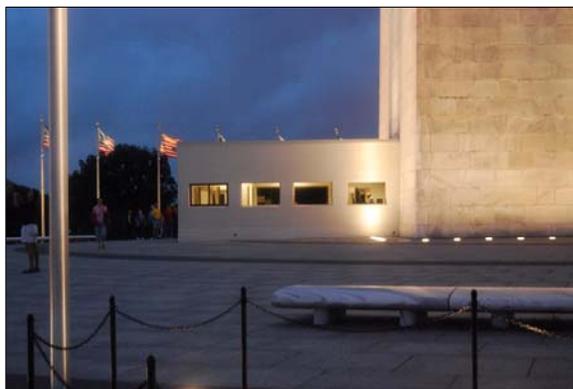
**Washington Monument and Grounds**

A new multipurpose visitor services facility on the northwest corner of 15th Street and Independence Avenue would be capable of meeting the needs of early morning ticket queues, food and retail, educational programs, and entertainment (events, performances, and evening entertainment), as well as office space. This facility would replace the Sylvan Theater and the circular restroom.

Utility connections and space for portable restrooms would be developed to support demonstrations, special events, and performances.

If determined feasible by engineering, security, geotechnical, and economic studies, an underground visitor parking facility would be built below the multipurpose recreation fields on the south grounds, with pedestrian access under Independence Avenue to the monument’s visitor service areas. A turfed surface would be provided over Maine Avenue to connect the monument grounds with the Tidal Basin.

WASHINGTON MONUMENT SECURITY BUILDING



An ongoing project is the removal of the temporary security screening building on the east side of the Washington Monument.

Tickets would continue to be distributed at Monument Lodge. Survey Lodge would be rehabilitated to provide services for people with disabilities.

### ***West Potomac Park (North of Independence Avenue)***

**Constitution Gardens.** Constitution Gardens would be a restful, high-quality visitor destination, with food service and opportunities for entertainment and enjoyment. Soils and vegetation would be rejuvenated. The lake would be reconstructed as a very shallow pool that could be drained for demonstrations and special events. Walks would be repaved, and some walkways would be widened to create venues for smaller events (exhibits, tents, and performances). Utilities and communication systems would be provided.

A multipurpose facility would be developed in the paved asphalt area at the east end of the lake. A flexible, multi-use outdoor stage would be provided in the lake near this facility, with informal seating around the lake for several thousand people. Performances of thematic entertainment could be offered (e.g., World War II era music, Latin American music). The existing restrooms would be replaced.

The Lockkeeper's House would be preserved in an adjacent location, slightly away from the intersection for safety reasons. The interior would be rehabilitated, and the building would be staffed for visitor information.

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial.** Additional seating would be provided near the memorial for contemplation.

**Lincoln Memorial and Grounds.** Restrooms inside the Lincoln Memorial would be expanded within the building footprint. Additional restrooms would be provided in the vicinity. A ceremonial use would be developed for the Watergate steps. Also, pedestrian crossings and access to Memorial Bridge would be improved.

**Korean War Veterans Memorial.** East-side entry walks would be provided to accommodate changing circulation patterns.

**Ash Woods.** Ash Road would become primarily a pedestrian walk and secondarily an access road. The restroom would be replaced with a new facility between the World War II and Lincoln memorials. The U.S. Park Police stables would be screened from view. A new parking area and vehicle access would be provided from Independence Avenue.

### ***West Potomac Park (South of Independence Avenue)***

**Tidal Basin Area.** The Tidal Basin area would be upgraded with high-quality paved walks, improved circulation, furniture, facilities, and services to enhance strolling and viewing experiences. The basin walls would be rebuilt to allow wider walkways so as to protect the cherry trees. Three pedestrian bridges near Inlet, Outlet, and Kutz bridges would be added to reduce congestion, along with pedestrian lighting for visitor safety and enjoyment.

Seating would be added, and facilities would be redesigned to reduce congestion and to complement the historic character of the National Mall. A small-scale, year-round, multipurpose facility would replace the refreshment stand. Restrooms would be provided, and the recreation equipment rental facility would be upgraded.

The parking lot would be removed if and when a new underground garage was provided on the south grounds of the Washington Monument.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.** Under alternative B food service would be provided in a location that would also be convenient to the future Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial. Visitor use patterns would be assessed to determine how to protect vegetation in areas where it is being trampled.

**West Potomac Riverfront Park.** The West Potomac Park river walls would be reconstructed as higher, stone-faced structural walls so they would not be overtopped by water and floating debris. A small staging area for demonstrations and events would be developed south of 23rd Street and Independence Avenue SW.

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial and Grounds.** Utilities and infrastructure would be installed on

**USE IMPACTS AT THE FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL**



Visitor use patterns would be assessed in areas where vegetation is being trampled.

the plaza for demonstrations and special events. The refreshment stand would be replaced.

**Alternative C — Focus on Urban Open Space, Urban Ecology, Recreation, and Healthy Lifestyles**

Alternative C would meet evolving recreational needs in the nation’s capital by providing beautiful, enjoyable, and ecologically sustainable open spaces that could be adapted to changing recreational patterns of diverse local and national users. This concept would contribute to healthy lifestyles, healthy parks, and healthy, more sustainable cities.

Recreational activities would be expanded by redesigning some areas, increasing recreation equipment rentals (such as boats, skates, and bicycles), adding playgrounds, and emphasizing connections to the recreational and enjoyment opportunities in East Potomac Park, the Georgetown Waterfront, and Rock Creek Park, as well as the southwest waterfront.

**The Mall**

**Union Square.** The Ulysses S. Grant Memorial would be the focal point of an active, paved urban civic square that would be a visitor destination and that would showcase reflective and interactive water features with an environmentally friendly design to highlight sustainable water management practices.

The Capitol Reflecting Pool would be redesigned as a shallow pool that could be drained

for demonstrations and events or frozen for ice skating. Infrastructure would be provided for demonstrations and events. Food and retail sales would be provided, plus automated, self-cleaning public restrooms.

**The Mall.** The Mall would be redesigned to better accommodate high levels of use for demonstrations and special events. It would provide additional, sustainable areas for recreational enjoyment (gardens, fountains) and improved lawn conditions (for informal pickup games and play). A children’s play area would be provided, as well as interactive water features at some locations. The center grass panels would be reconfigured by removing crosswalks to provide larger spaces for informal recreation.

Soil, turf, and tree-growing conditions would be improved. No temporary event facilities, such as tents, stages, or vehicles, would be allowed in the elm tree panels. Gravel walkways would be replaced with sustainable, universally accessible surface materials.

A visitor contact station would continue to be provided near the Smithsonian Metro stop. The Mall would be enhanced with additional lighting and floral displays. Small restroom facilities would be provided near the refreshment stands.

**The Washington Monument and Grounds**

High-quality indoor/outdoor visitor services (food service, retail, restrooms) would be provided between 14th and 15th streets. The circular restroom would be replaced, and automated, self-cleaning restrooms would be installed near Constitution Avenue. The Sylvan Theater would be reconstructed and reoriented to provide a new entertainment venue with improved viewing.

A 14th Street vehicular tunnel would be built to improve pedestrian movement and safety. Pedestrian crosswalks would be enhanced to increase their visibility to drivers, pedestrian waiting areas would be widened, and crossing times on 15th Street would be extended. Roads, parking, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation would be redesigned to better connect park areas, to improve safety and recreational opportunities, and to connect to the southwest

waterfront and East Potomac Park. A separate dedicated bike trail would be constructed.

### **West Potomac Park (North of Independence Avenue)**

**Constitution Gardens.** Constitution Gardens would be a restful, quality visitor destination, with a garden café. Soils and vegetation would be rejuvenated. The lake would be reconstructed to be self-sustaining for fish and plants, and it would be incorporated into the urban storm-water retention systems to control flooding. A nonpotable water source would be found. Recreation equipment rentals, such as model boats and lawn chairs, would be provided for visitor enjoyment. A children's play area would be added, along with an informal interactive water feature. Walks would be repaved and widened in some areas to create venues for small events (exhibits, tents, performances), with some mobile refreshment carts.

The Lockkeeper's House would be preserved and moved slightly away from the intersection for safety reasons. After rehabilitating the interior, the building would be staffed for visitor information. Vehicular and pedestrian movements would be improved at the intersection.

**Lincoln Memorial and Grounds.** Restrooms would be expanded inside the memorial, and additional restrooms would be provided near the south refreshment stand.

Water taxi stops could be accommodated at the Watergate steps, with a redesign of Ohio Drive for safe pedestrian access.

**Korean War Veterans Memorial.** Visitor use patterns would be assessed, and additional entry walks would be provided.

**Ash Woods.** The U.S. Park Police stables would be reconstructed, and information about the U.S. Park Police and horse patrols would be provided. The restroom would be replaced with a new facility between the World War II and Lincoln memorials. Recreation fields in the area would be upgraded with backstops, and other facilities to avoid the practice of leagues leaving their equipment on the fields. Vehicular access would be provided to the fields.

### **West Potomac Park (South of Independence Avenue)**

**Tidal Basin Area.** The Tidal Basin area would be upgraded with high-quality paved walks, improved circulation, and facilities, as well as additional recreational opportunities. Soil and vegetation conditions would be improved. The basin walls would be rebuilt to allow wider walkways, and pedestrian bridges would be added to reduce congestion. Pedestrian lighting would be installed in a manner that would not affect the evening lighting ambience of memorials.

Visitor amenities, including the refreshment stand and recreation equipment rental facilities, would be replaced. Recreation rentals would be expanded to include kayaks and rowboats. The bay north of Kutz Bridge would be filled to provide additional recreation fields.

**Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.** A refreshment stand without restrooms would be built at a site that would also be convenient to the future Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

**West Potomac Park Riverfront.** Where feasible, a sustainable, vegetated shoreline would be developed. The river walls would be reconstructed where necessary. Trees would be added, and river views would be emphasized.

Separate bike and walking trails would be provided, with an emphasis on trail connections to East Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park, as well as to the southwest waterfront. Roads and parking areas would be redesigned as needed to accommodate bike lanes.

**U.S. PARK POLICE STABLES IN ASH WOODS**



The U.S. Park Police area is visible from the JFK Hockey Fields to the north.

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial and Grounds.**

Utilities and infrastructure would be installed on the plaza for demonstrations and special events. The refreshment stand would be relocated to be more convenient to bicycle and pedestrian walkways, as well as the tour bus drop-off.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

This management plan develops a vision, or a shared understanding between NPS managers and the public, about the kinds of resource conditions, visitor experiences, and facilities that would best fulfill the purposes of the National Mall. Part of this process is the analysis of environmental impacts. This document identifies the types of impacts that would occur and where.

Impact topics were identified in accordance with federal laws, regulations, and executive orders; NPS *Management Policies 2006*; and NPS knowledge of limited or easily affected resources. Public input during the scoping process was also used to determine impact topics.

Impact topics that are analyzed include cultural resources (including historic properties and cultural landscapes); natural resources (water resources, soils, vegetation, and fish and wildlife); demonstrations, special events, and national celebrations; access and circulation; visitor experience; the socioeconomic environment; and park operations. Topics that were dismissed from further detailed analysis are discussed beginning on page 32 in the main document.

Impact intensity levels or thresholds were defined for each impact topic. The following definitions generally apply to all topics; however, the analysis of cultural resources has additional requirements in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (see page 368).

- **Negligible** — The impact would be barely detectable.
- **Minor** — The impact would be detectable, or it would have a limited effect, either adverse or beneficial.
- **Moderate** — The impact would be readily apparent, and it would have an appreciable impact, either adverse or beneficial.

- **Major** — The impact would be readily apparent, and it would be severely adverse or exceptionally beneficial.

Impacts could be beneficial or adverse. The duration of impacts would be temporary (a few hours up to two days), short term (up to one year or the length of a construction project), long-term (up to the life of the plan or 50 years), or permanent (longer than 50 years).

**Impacts Common to All Alternatives**

Direct and indirect impacts of the alternatives are summarized below. Cumulative impacts of past, present, reasonably foreseeable projects are discussed in the main impact analysis. The analysis compares the impacts of the alternatives to existing conditions (the no-action alternative).

**Cultural Resource Impacts.** The impacts of preserving and protecting memorials under all alternatives would be long-term and beneficial, but only negligible to minor in intensity because perceived differences would be limited.

Actions proposed in the plan are conceptual, and their actual impact on cultural resources cannot be determined at this time, so potential impacts are described. A park-specific programmatic agreement with the D.C. Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation would be developed as part of this planning process.

**Natural Resource Impacts.** Water quality problems in designed water features would continue to be addressed, and alternative management methods, such as addressing algae growth in designed water features, would help improve water quality, with long-term, negligible, beneficial impacts. No proposals would affect natural floodplains or cause a meaningful change in the development or use of floodplains. Soils would be managed to restore natural processes and functions, resulting in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts. Vegetation would be managed to improve the appearance of turf, plants, and trees, resulting in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts.

**Impacts on Demonstrations, Special Events, and National Celebrations.** There would be no

change in permit regulations under any alternative. Impacts on event organizers from periodic closings of areas for construction, restoration, or maintenance would be short- to long-term, minor, and adverse. If some events were relocated from the National Mall to other venues, impacts would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of reduced resource impacts on the National Mall.

**Access and Circulation Impacts.** Adding the National Mall name to the Smithsonian Metro station, continuing to redesign tour bus drop-offs and pickups, and working with the city and local businesses to provide an appropriate amount of convenient parking for tour buses and visitors would result in long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts.

**Visitor Experience Impacts.** Continuing to work with local tourist organizations and the tour bus industry to ensure that they have accurate information for visitors would have long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts. Other beneficial actions would make access to areas on the National Mall easier (affecting 20%–30% of visitors), as well as other nearby destinations (such as the U.S. Capitol and the White House).

**Socioeconomic Impacts.** Impacts on the local and regional economy would be long-term, minor, and beneficial as a result of visitation to existing monuments and memorials on the National Mall. Impacts on commercial business opportunities in and around the National Mall, as well as in the metropolitan area, would be long-term, minor, and beneficial as a result of new business opportunities for retail and food service near the National Mall and ongoing use of businesses in nearby areas.

**Impacts on Park Operations.** Overall impacts on park operations would be long-term, moderate to major, and beneficial because of more efficient custodial and trash collection, less intrusive temporary fencing, and a solid waste and recycling plan. Short-term, moderate, beneficial impacts would result from continuing to use a visual quality team to identify high-profile problems and concerns that would be addressed promptly by a quick response team.

## **Impacts of the No-Action Alternative**

**Cultural Resource Impacts.** The no-action alternative would result in long-term, negligible to minor impacts on cultural resources that would either be adverse or beneficial. Maintaining park areas in their present condition would result in the continued deterioration of features such as the Capitol Reflecting Pool and vegetation on the Mall. Replacing the temporary visitor service tent at the Washington Monument could potentially affect components of the cultural landscape, such as views and vistas. The dry-laid seawalls along the West Potomac Park riverfront would continue to deteriorate because of erosion from wave action and periodic flooding.

**Natural Resource Impacts.** Impacts on groundwater and surface water resources, including potable water use, would continue to be short- and long-term, minor to moderate, and adverse. Soil impacts would continue to be short- and long-term, minor to major, and adverse; impacts would be considered unacceptable because compacted soils would impede the attainment of the park's desired future conditions for natural and cultural resources, but no key park resource would be impaired. Vegetation impacts would continue to be short- and long-term, major, and adverse. Impacts especially on the elm trees on the Mall could be severe enough to be unacceptable because of continued impedance to the attainment of desired future resource conditions and diminished opportunities for current or future generations to enjoy or be inspired by park resources. The impacts on vegetation could lead to impairment of a key park resource unless successful mitigating measures were employed. Impacts on native and naturalized fish and wildlife populations would continue to be long-term, moderate, and adverse.

**Impacts on Demonstrations, Special Events, and National Celebrations.** Present impacts on participants and organizers of demonstrations, special events, and national celebrations 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). Over

the life of this plan impacts would likely become moderate to major and adverse because of inadequate venues and the lack of visitor facilities and amenities.

**Access and Circulation Impacts.** There would be no change to access and circulation under the no-action alternative, but over the long-term impacts would be moderate to major and adverse because visitor access would become more difficult as use increased. The pedestrian environment would become less desirable, with inadequate walkway surfaces and amenities and more impacts from vehicle traffic. Facilities would not be improved for bicyclists, and increased traffic congestion would affect both motorists and visitors.

**Visitor Experience Impacts.** The impacts of the no-action alternative on visitor experiences would be long-term, moderate to major, and adverse despite the fact that visitors would continue to be inspired by the National Mall and its memorials. Visitor expectations for quality experiences would not be met because of the degraded condition of natural resources, inadequate information and education about park resources and opportunities, insufficient facilities (such as restrooms and food service) for present user volumes, and continued public health and safety challenges.

**Socioeconomic Impacts.** Impacts on the local and regional economy under the no-action alternative would be long-term, negligible, and beneficial because of slightly increased visitation levels to the National Mall and related visitor expenditures at commercial businesses.

**Impacts on Park Operations.** Impacts on park operations under the no-action alternative would continue to be long-term, moderate to major, and adverse because of not meeting desired standards (including a deferred maintenance backlog; difficult-to-maintain systems and infrastructure; and lack of venues designed to accommodate intensive levels of use), inefficient operations, and unsustainable practices. The gap in funding between what is required and the current park budget would continue to leave the entire park funded at about 54% of need. Despite the long-term, moderate to major, beneficial impacts of actions common to all alterna-

tives, the no-action alternative would continue to cause ongoing operational challenges.

## Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

**Cultural Resource Impacts.** Long-term, minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on cultural resources would result from restoring the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial; replacing compacted soils and installing irrigation systems and underground utility infrastructure for demonstrations and special events on the Mall; constructing a new multipurpose visitor service facility for the Washington Monument; moving the Lock-keeper's House to a safer location and adaptively rehabilitating it; rehabilitating landscape features at Constitution Gardens, including the lake; and stabilizing dry-laid stone seawalls along the West Potomac Park riverfront. Redesigning Union Square would change its appearance, resulting in long-term, major, adverse impacts. Long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impacts would result from widening some walkways, paving gravel walkways, providing additional seating and interactive water features, and developing a welcome plaza near the Metro station on the Mall; providing a new multipurpose facility at the east end of Constitution Gardens; adding a restroom near the south Lincoln Memorial refreshment stand; rebuilding the Tidal Basin seawalls and widening walks; constructing separate bicycle and pedestrian trails; and redesigning the tour bus drop-off area and replacing the refreshment stand at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The impacts of other actions would be negligible. There would be no impairment of cultural resources.

**Natural Resource Impacts.** There would be no unacceptable impacts on natural resources under the preferred alternative and no impairment of key park resources. Impacts on potable water use, as well as on groundwater and surface water resources, would be short-term, moderate, and adverse during construction at the Tidal Basin and along the Potomac River. Long-term impacts would be minor and beneficial. Impacts on soils during construction would be short-term, minor, and adverse. Long-term impacts would be moderate and beneficial due to soil augmentation or replacement. New or widened sidewalks would result in long-term,

minor, adverse impacts on vegetation, but other actions to improve growing conditions for park vegetation would result in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts. Impacts on fish and wildlife would be long-term, minor, and beneficial because of stewardship messages to visitors, a self-sustaining pond/wetland ecosystem at Constitution Gardens Lake, higher seawalls along the Tidal Basin, and a naturalized Potomac River shoreline. Short- and long-term, negligible to moderate, adverse impacts on fish and wildlife would result from various construction projects throughout the National Mall.

**Impacts on Demonstrations, Special Events, and National Celebrations.** The 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; conveniently located civic infrastructure to facilitate event operations; permanent visitor facilities such as restrooms; a redesigned Union Square that could accommodate larger crowds; a new Sylvan Theater with a flexible multipurpose space; 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.

**Access and Circulation Impacts.** The preferred alternative would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts on access and circulation because of a greater emphasis on a pedestrian-oriented environment; improved, safer, and more comfortable walking and bicycle environments; separate bicycle routes or lanes; improved roadway access in the southeast area of the Tidal Basin; and more options and access for people with disabilities.

**Visitor Experience Impacts.** Compared to the no-action alternative, the impacts of the preferred alternative on visitor experiences would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of well-maintained areas that would meet desired conditions, enhanced website information, a more welcoming atmosphere (including a welcome plaza on the Mall and daily interpretive

program listings), more opportunities to understand core American values through expanded educational themes, well-dispersed and pleasant visitor facilities that were adequately sized to meet user needs, more food service choice, an improved pedestrian and bicycling environment, increased opportunities for informal enjoyment, additional recreational opportunities and improved playing fields, more shaded seating, additional pedestrian lighting, and an emergency notification system.

**Socioeconomic Impacts.** The preferred alternative would result in long-term, minor, beneficial impacts on the local and regional economy because of longer visitor stays due to better resource conditions and new and improved visitor services and facilities, increased and diversified commercial business opportunities that would meet visitor needs on the National Mall and in surrounding areas, and minor increases in construction-related expenditures.

**Impacts on Park Operations.** Compared to the no-action alternative, the overall impacts of the preferred alternative on park operations would be long-term, major, and beneficial as a result of improved park conditions, a reduced deferred maintenance backlog, increased maintainability of mechanical systems and infrastructure, improved operational access, a streamlined permitting process for demonstrations and special events, a reduced funding gap between desired conditions and park budgets, and exceedance of sustainability standards for development, renewable energy, and water use.

## **Impacts of Alternative A**

**Cultural Resource Impacts.** Negligible to minor, beneficial impacts on cultural resources would result from restoring the Grant Memorial, replacing soils and installing irrigation systems on the Mall, and removing vehicle parking along north-south streets (3rd, 4th, and 7th streets). Redesigning Union Square, including the Capitol Reflecting Pool, would be a major, adverse, impact. Minor to moderate, adverse impacts would result from developing a visitor service facility for the Washington Monument between 14th and 15th streets; altering circulation patterns from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Rock Creek Parkway; not addressing impacts of high

use on the designed landscape at the Korean War Veterans Memorial; widening Tidal Basin walks and raising the height of the seawall; and replacing visitor facilities on the northeast side of the Tidal Basin. The impacts of other actions would be negligible. There would be no impairment of cultural resources.

**Natural Resource Impacts.** There would be no unacceptable impacts on natural resources under alternative A and no impairment of key park resources. Short-term impacts on water resources would be negligible and adverse during construction of new Tidal Basin seawalls; long-term impacts would be negligible to minor and beneficial. Soil impacts would be short-term, negligible, and adverse from construction and long-term, moderate, and beneficial from soil augmentation or replacement. Park vegetation would be affected by new construction, which would result in long-term, negligible, adverse impacts and long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts. There would be long-term, negligible to minor, beneficial impacts on fish and wildlife from actions at Constitution Gardens Lake and the Tidal Basin. Construction projects at other sites would result in short- and long-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts.

**Impacts on Demonstrations, Special Events, and National Celebrations.** The overall impacts of alternative A on demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events 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. 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.

**Access and Circulation Impacts.** Alternative A would have long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts on visitor access to the Mall and the pedestrian environment due to increased crosswalk timing and additional pedestrian

amenities. Impacts on bicycle users would be long-term, moderate, and adverse because unsafe riding conditions would continue.

**Visitor Experience Impacts.** Alternative A would have long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts on visitor experiences because of substantially improved resource conditions and the appearance of the National Mall, better website information, educational themes focused on memorials and the development of the capital city, improved visitor facilities supplemented by small visitor facilities and food service at refreshment stands, a better pedestrian environment, improved playing field conditions, and an emergency notification system. However, needs related to high use would not be met.

**Socioeconomic Impacts.** Actions under alternative A would result in long-term, minor, beneficial impacts on the local and regional economy. Visitor experiences would be enhanced due to improved conditions of the historic landscape and vistas, but visitation levels would likely increase only slightly. Commercial business opportunities on the National Mall would increase slightly with improved food service facilities. There would be a minor increase in construction-related expenditures.

**Impacts on Park Operations.** Impacts on park operations under alternative A would be long-term, moderate, and adverse because impacts of high use would not be fully addressed, such as developing more sustainable venues for demonstrations, special events, and national celebrations or seeking sustainable water sources for large water features.

## Impacts of Alternative B

**Cultural Resource Impacts.** Minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on cultural resources would result from restoring the Grant Memorial; replacing compacted soils and installing irrigation systems and underground event utility infrastructure on the Mall; constructing a new multipurpose visitor facility to replace the Sylvan Theater at the Washington Monument; and moving the Lockkeeper's House to a safer location and adaptively rehabilitating it. Long-term, major, adverse impacts would result from redesigning Union Square, including removing

the Capitol Reflecting Pool to create a paved civic square, and from constructing an underground parking garage between 12th and 15 streets with portals on 15th Street. Minor to moderate, adverse impacts would result from installing an interactive water feature at the 8th Street cross axis, constructing a visitor contact station and restroom facilities on the Mall, along with enlarging and paving walkways and providing additional paved areas for demonstrations and special events; providing pedestrian bridges or underpasses and underground parking below the south grounds of the Washington Monument; redesigning Constitution Gardens Lake to be drainable for demonstrations and special events; installing additional restroom facilities near the north and south refreshment stands near the Lincoln Memorial; widening Tidal Basin walkways, constructing three pedestrian bridges, and replacing the refreshment stand and restrooms; constructing higher stone-faced walls along the Potomac River; and replacing the refreshment stand at the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. The impacts of other actions would be negligible. There would be no impairment of cultural resources.

**Natural Resource Impacts.** There would be no unacceptable impacts on natural resources under alternative B and no impairment of key park resources. Impacts on water resources would be short-term, moderate, and adverse during construction at the Tidal Basin and along the Potomac River. Over the long-term there would be both adverse and beneficial impacts on groundwater and surface water resources, with combined impacts being neutral. Impacts on soils would be short-term, negligible, and adverse from construction and long-term, moderate, and beneficial from soil augmentation or replacement. Vegetation impacts would be long-term, negligible, and adverse because of new and widened sidewalks. Overall, long-term impacts would be moderate and beneficial because of improved growing conditions for park vegetation. The continued use of the Mall elm tree panels, however, could result in long-term, major, adverse impacts if turf/root zones and soils were not properly protected through an acceptable and authorized method. There would be short- and long-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts on fish and wildlife from a drainable lake at Constitution Gardens, modifi-

cations of the Tidal Basin, and various construction projects. A more natural Potomac River shoreline in some areas would result in long-term, minor, beneficial impacts.

**Impacts on Demonstrations, Special Events, and National Celebrations.** Taken as a whole, alternative B would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts on demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events 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 new Sylvan Theater with a flexible multipurpose space; and a new venue at Constitution Gardens.

**Access and Circulation Impacts.** For access and circulation, alternative B would result in long-term, major, beneficial impacts because of improved access, underground parking garages, a safer pedestrian environment (including safer crosswalks), and reduced conflicts with traffic. Impacts on bicycle users would be long-term, moderate, and adverse because neither the needs of bicyclists nor local planning goals relating to bicycling would be met.

**Visitor Experience Impacts.** Compared to the no-action alternative, the impacts of alternative B on visitor experiences would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of well-maintained areas that would meet desired conditions for the National Mall, better website information, educational themes focused on the memorials and the civic function of the National Mall, well-dispersed and pleasant visitor facilities that were adequately sized to meet user needs, more food service choice, an improved pedestrian environment, increased opportunities for informal enjoyment as well as additional recreational opportunities and improved playing fields, more shaded seating, additional pedestrian lighting, and an emergency notification system.

**Socioeconomic Impacts.** Impacts on the local and regional economy under alternative B would be long-term, minor, and beneficial because of longer visitor stays due to better resource conditions and improved services and facilities, increased and diversified commercial business

opportunities that would meet visitor needs, and minor increases in construction-related expenses. Parking costs for underground garages (if determined feasible) would result in long-term, minor, adverse impacts on visitor costs.

**Impacts on Park Operations.** The overall impacts of alternative B on park operations would be long-term, major, and beneficial as a result of improved park conditions, a reduced deferred maintenance backlog, increased maintainability of mechanical systems and infrastructure, improved operational access, a streamlined permitting process for demonstrations and special events, a reduced funding gap between desired conditions and park budgets, and greater reliance on renewable energy sources. However, unlike the preferred alternative and alternative C, no measures would be taken to make water use more sustainable or to support local goals to encourage greater use of alternative modes of access.

### Impacts of Alternative C

**Cultural Resource Impacts.** Minor to moderate, beneficial impacts on cultural resources would result from restoring the Grant Memorial; removing compacted soils and installing irrigation systems and underground event utility infrastructure on the Mall; replacing the Sylvan Theater with new facilities; moving the Lock-keeper's House to a safer location and adaptively rehabilitating it; rehabilitating Constitution Gardens Lake; rehabilitating the Tidal Basin seawalls; and stabilizing the dry-laid stone seawall along the Potomac River. Redesigning Union Square would result in long-term, minor to major, adverse impacts. Filling in the north bay of the Tidal Basin to provide additional athletic fields would be a permanent, major, adverse effect, which would also alter the setting of the John Paul Jones Memorial. Minor to moderate, adverse impacts would result from removing some north-south walks near 8th Street, adding interactive water features, paving walkways, and adding restrooms and refreshment stands on the Mall; constructing a new visitor service facility at the Washington Monument between 14th and 15th streets, and decking over Maine Avenue to connect to the Tidal Basin area; adding a new restroom near the south refreshment stand at the Lincoln Memorial;

widening walks around the Tidal Basin, redesigning roads and parking, and constructing new pedestrian bridges; and providing separate bicycle and pedestrian lanes. The impacts of other actions would be negligible. However, under this alternative several actions could affect character-defining features. There would be no impairment of cultural resources.

**Natural Resource Impacts.** There would be no unacceptable impacts on natural resources under alternative C and no impairment of key park resources. Impacts on water resources would be short-term, moderate, and adverse during construction at the Tidal Basin and along the Potomac River. Long-term impacts on potable water use, and on groundwater and surface water resources, would be negligible to minor and beneficial. Soil impacts would be short-term, negligible, and adverse from construction and long-term, moderate, and beneficial from soil augmentation or replacement. There would be long-term, negligible, adverse impacts on park vegetation from new and widened sidewalks. Improved growing conditions for park vegetation would result in long-term, moderate, beneficial impacts. Impacts on fish and wildlife would be long-term, negligible to minor, and beneficial from stewardship messages to visitors, a self-sustaining pond/wetland ecosystem at Constitution Gardens Lake, and higher seawalls around the Tidal Basin. Various other construction projects throughout the National Mall would result in short- and long-term, negligible to moderate, adverse impacts.

**Impacts on Demonstrations, Special Events, and National Celebrations.** 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.

**Access and Circulation Impacts.** Impacts on access and circulation under alternative C would be long-term, major, and beneficial because of improved access and parking, a greater emphasis on safer and pleasanter pedestrian and bicycling environments, and more options for families and people with disabilities.

**Visitor Experience Impacts.** Alternative C would have long-term, major, beneficial impacts on visitor experiences because of improved conditions on the National Mall, better website information, educational themes focused on memorials along with stewardship and healthy lifestyles, well-dispersed and pleasant facilities adequately sized to meet user needs, more food service choice, an improved pedestrian and bicycling environment, more opportunities for informal enjoyment, additional recreational opportunities and improved playing fields, more shaded seating, additional pedestrian lighting, and an emergency notification system.

**Socioeconomic Impacts.** Impacts on the local and regional economy would be long-term, minor, and beneficial because of longer visitor stays due to better resource conditions, improved services and facilities, and more year-round recreational opportunities; diversified commercial business opportunities that would meet visitor needs; and minor increases in construction-related expenses.

**Impacts on Park Operations.** The overall impacts of alternative C on park operations would be long-term, major, and beneficial as a result of improved park conditions, a reduced deferred maintenance backlog, increased maintainability of mechanical systems and infrastructure, improved operational access, a streamlined permitting process for demonstrations and special events, a reduced funding gap between desired conditions and park budgets, and exceedance of sustainability standards for development, renewable energy, and water use.

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## THE NEXT STEPS

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After the distribution of this *Draft National Mall Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, there will be a 90-day public review and comment period, after which the NPS planning team will evaluate comments from other federal agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding the draft plan. Appropriate changes will be incorporated into a *Final National Mall Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. The final plan will include letters from governmental agencies, any substantive comments on the draft document, and NPS responses to those comments. Following distribution of the final plan and a 30-day no-action period, a record of decision approving a final plan will be signed by the NPS National Capital regional director. The record of decision will document the NPS selection of an alternative for implementation. Once it is signed, the plan can then be implemented.

The approved National Mall plan will provide a comprehensive vision and framework to protect the historic character of the National Mall, to restore its health and beauty, to help it function better as America's civic space, and to meet the needs of local, national, and international visitors today and tomorrow for enjoyment, education, and recreation.

However, completing the plan does not ensure that all actions will take place nor ensure funding. The National Park Service requires implementation projects to be within an approved vision plan, and the approved plan would take this important step toward implementation. As the plan is implemented, many of the proposed projects would provide additional opportunities for public involvement. They would undergo reviews by and consultation with the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the D.C. Historic Preservation Office. Some projects might require congressional action or changes in federal or park regulations.