

# PLANNING FOR THE NATIONAL MALL AND PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

## Contents

---

Introduction .....	1
Purpose of the Plan .....	2
Need for a Plan .....	2
<b>Interrelationship with Other Planning</b>	
Efforts .....	3
Public Engagement.....	4
Issues and Objectives.....	4
Resource Protection .....	4
Conserving the Character of the Evolving Historic Landscape.....	4
Defining Landscape Standards.....	5
Use and Visitor Experience .....	6
The National Symbolic Landscape within a Complex Urban Framework .....	6
Stage for Demonstrations and Special Events .....	6
Recreational Use .....	7
Interpretation, Education, Orientation, and Information .....	8
Public Access.....	9
Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park.....	11
Operations .....	13
Security and Public Safety .....	13
Facilities.....	13
Partnerships and Working Relationships .....	15

## INTRODUCTION

---

The National Mall stretches west from the U.S. Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and the Potomac River, and north from the Jefferson Memorial to Constitution Avenue (see the “National Mall Study Area” map in Newsletter 1). This highly recognizable space, perhaps the most significant historic landscape in the United States, needs comprehensive planning to publicly address a number of issues. In 2003 Congress amended the Commemorative Works Act and declared the National Mall to be a “substantially completed work of civic art” and stated that no new or unapproved memorials or visitor centers could be added within what was labeled as the

Reserve. Congress also directed the National Park Service, as the responsible federal agency, to begin planning for the future of the National Mall. Planning will help the National Park Service achieve its core missions to protect resources and provide for visitor enjoyment.

It is imperative that the National Mall accommodate the nation’s continuing history. Defining how to balance use with desired natural and cultural resource conditions will be an important undertaking of the planning process. Public involvement in the creation of a vision for the National Mall is vital because of the national symbolism of the federal capital, and because the area serves as the stage for public gatherings, demonstrations, commemorations, and national celebrations, as well as the setting for recreation and understanding the American experience.

Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, located between the U.S. Capitol and the White House, is a linear, primarily paved, urban park on either side of a major roadway. Pennsylvania Avenue provides spectacular views of the U.S. Capitol that hark back to the L’Enfant plan, which is depicted in the pavement at Freedom Plaza (between 13th and 14th streets NW). The national historic park is composed of separate park areas, plazas, sidewalks, special lighting, trees, sculpture, and memorials — the largest parks being Pershing Park, the U.S. Navy Memorial, and John Marshall Park, in addition to Freedom Plaza.

Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park has been added to the planning area because it is near the National Mall, and its planning history has been intertwined with that of the National Mall. The National Park Service also has some planning issues to resolve.

The National Park Service, the Architect of the Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Department of Agriculture all have jurisdiction over lands and

roads within the area that is perceived by the general public to be the National Mall. Other governmental entities with some level of responsibility within or near the National Mall include the General Services Administration, the District of Columbia, the D.C. Department of Transportation, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. In addition, governmental organizations such as the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the D.C. Historic Preservation Office have consultation, planning, review, and approval authority for issues related to planning, security, historic preservation, and design.

The following adjacent areas will not be included in the National Mall plan because plans have been previously prepared or because they are managed by entities other than the National Park Service and separate planning efforts are underway:

- The National Park Service manages the White House and President’s Park, and a *Comprehensive Design Plan* was completed in 1999.
- The Architect of the Capitol manages adjacent federal lands associated with the U.S. Capitol (where a major new visitor center is under construction), the Library of Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Botanic Gardens. The *Capitol Complex Master Plan* is being updated for these areas, and the National Park Service and the Architect of the Capitol will coordinate so their plans and visions for the future are compatible.
- The museums and facilities of the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institution, as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, line the eastern end of the National Mall. Property and boundaries for the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institution are defined in 40 USC 6301 (1)(2). Many of the museums have ongoing perimeter security projects, some of which are being coordinated with NPS projects.
- East Potomac Park\* has never been considered as part of the National Mall, it was not addressed in previous plans for the National Mall, and it is outside the study area boundaries.

---

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the proposed plan for the National Mall is to prepare a 50-year comprehensive planning vision statement and environmental compliance document that can be supplemented by related technical manuals detailing how to achieve the vision goals. This will be a specialized multiyear and multidisciplinary planning effort.

Critical to this planning effort is the establishment of a common public understanding of the extent and identity of the National Mall. The National Park Service uses the term National Mall for the Mall (which extends from the grounds of the U.S. Capitol to the Washington Monument), the Washington Monument, and West Potomac Park, including the various memorials located within these areas.

---

## NEED FOR A PLAN

Comprehensive planning is needed to define the future and detail specific desired conditions and actions. Planning must take into consideration the unique urban planning environment of the capital city. Open and inclusive

---

\* The 330-acre East Potomac Park, also known as Hains Point, provides recreational open space, and thousands of trees create a pleasant recreational green space. The popular 36-hole public golf course has operated continuously since 1920. Other facilities include a driving range, miniature golf course, a Works Progress Administration era public swimming pool, a playground, tennis courts, ballfields, picnic grounds, and restrooms. The East Potomac Park golf course, swimming pool, field house, and cherry trees are on the National Register of Historic Places. The park also contains several public parking lots within easy walking distance of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. East Potomac Park also is the location for headquarters buildings for the NPS National Capital Region, the U.S. Park Police, and National Mall & Memorial Parks, as well as park maintenance facilities, a U.S. Park Police substation, and visitor transportation operational facilities.

public civic engagement must be a vital ongoing component of the planning process.

A comprehensive plan is needed for the following reasons:

1. *Respond to congressional direction:*

- The National Park Service is directed to plan for the National Mall within the Reserve so as to preserve its character.

2. *Address NPS needs:*

- Sustainable levels of public enjoyment and visitor services need to be defined.
- The identity and extent of the National Mall need to be defined for the public. Often the terms National Mall and the Mall are used interchangeably, and map labeling and references to the National Mall reinforce public confusion.
- The foundation of comprehensive planning (mandates, purpose, and significance) need to be shared with the public.
- Desired conditions and standards need to be identified and attained.
- Opportunities for partnership groups who may be willing to fund construction, landscape renovation, and maintenance projects to achieve higher standards need to be identified.

3. *Respond to public interest*

- Planning needs to address public perceptions or misperceptions that:
  - legislative protections are ignored
  - open space has been eroded
  - public involvement has been lacking
  - federal planning is uncoordinated and jurisdictional obstacles exist
  - cultural resource data to protect resources is lacking
  - hastily conceived security measures alter character and use
  - some uses may be inappropriate
  - piecemeal planning has eroded the overall vision for the National Mall
  - more use and activities are needed

- higher standards for landscape maintenance are needed

## INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

The National Capital Planning Commission's 1997 *Legacy Plan* laid the groundwork for Congress to amend the Commemorative Works Act in 2003 to strengthen and clarify its purpose and to designate the Reserve area. The *Legacy Plan* calls for re-centering future development along the major thoroughfares that radiate from the Capitol — North, South, and East Capitol streets.

The 2001 *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* identifies more than 100 sites in Washington, D.C., for future memorials and museums. It acknowledges that the Reserve does not contain sufficient space to keep pace with our nation's evolving history and the need to commemorate its culture, heroes, and history in the future.

The National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts have begun planning for federal areas surrounding the Reserve by means of the National Capital Framework Plan. This plan will implement the *Legacy Plan* and the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*, and the National Mall plan will be proceeding along a parallel track with the Framework Plan.

The National Park Service's Center for Urban Ecology is an interdisciplinary team that provides scientific guidance, technical assistance, and education for the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of park resources within urban landscapes. The center is committed to improving and conserving the quality of natural resources throughout the National Capital Region. Working with resource managers, researchers, and the public, the center strives to discover and incorporate new ways to understand, preserve, and enhance natural communities within and around the national parks in the Washington, D.C., area. By continuing to promote the best available science for park management decisions, the center aspires to be recognized as a leader in the important field of urban ecosystem stewardship. The center's research and initiatives continue to pro-

vide planning guidance on issues affecting the National Mall plan.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

---

The National Mall is a place that many Americans care deeply about — its open space connects the legislative and executive centers of government, it symbolizes our national values, it records our nation’s ideals, and it preserves our common cultural heritage. It is a pilgrimage site for many Americans, as well as international visitors.

Consequently, a civic engagement plan emphasizes open and inclusive communications. Completing the National Mall plan and subsequent implementation plans will require ongoing consultation and coordination with other entities involved in planning and construction efforts.

## ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

---

A number of critical issues need to be addressed through comprehensive planning. Areas of public interest and concern include the appearance of the National Mall, appropriate uses and levels of use, preservation of resources and the historic character, the impacts of special events and security on public and recreational use, and the challenges of maintaining the National Mall to high standards of excellence.

The most important goal for planning is to define a clear and common vision for balancing use of the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, while achieving desired natural and cultural resource conditions.

Some topics that will be addressed during planning are discussed below. The National Park Service expects that the issues and objectives will be refined or changed in response to cooperating agency and public participation, as well as ongoing public engagement.

## Resource Protection

### *Conserving the Character of the Evolving Historic Landscape*

**Issue** — To what extent can the evolving history of the National Mall be balanced with the conservation of the historic landscape character, and what desired cultural resource management standards should be achieved?

**Background** — The Mall is the core public open space of the 1791 L’Enfant plan and the 1901 McMillan plan. However, within the National Mall separate NPS park areas have evolved. These are the Mall, the Washington Monument, and West Potomac Park, which includes the following units — Lincoln Memorial, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, FDR Memorial, George Mason Memorial, Constitution Gardens, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the World War II Memorial. Planning over the last quarter of the 20th century focused on specific projects, such as the memorials. The result has been a fragmented approach that affects our premiere national historic landscape with its great American symbols of democracy.

Historic and cultural landscape information has largely been completed. Cultural landscape reports have been completed for the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and West Potomac Park. A cultural landscape inventory has been prepared for the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. In preparation for planning the National Park Service has:

- prepared two cultural landscape inventories for the Mall, from 1st to 14th streets NW/SW between Jefferson Drive NW and Madison Drive SW and for Union Square, from 1st to 3rd streets NW/SW between Pennsylvania and Maryland avenues
- prepared a historic structures report for the D.C. War Memorial
- updated the National Mall & Memorial Parks “List of Classified Structures”
- scheduled a cultural landscape inventory for Constitution Gardens for fall 2006

**Planning Objectives** — To protect and conserve the nation’s preeminent historic landscape, the National Mall plan will

- define a vision for preserving an evolving historic landscape
- define a character for concession and visitor facilities that is compatible with the historic development of this public space
- define desired cultural resource conditions

**Defining Landscape Standards**

**Issue** — To what extent can the highest landscape standards be achieved and sustained while accommodating frequent intensive public use?

**Background** — The National Mall is a symbol of our nation and is expected to exemplify superior landscape standards. Nearly 600 American elms line the Mall and over 2,100 Japanese cherry trees encircle the Tidal Basin. Flower beds are botanical showplaces that display thousands of tulips, pansies, and annuals. This impressive mingling of natural and cultural resources has made Washington, D.C., one of the most heavily visited and photographed cities in the world. However, the National Park Service has repeatedly heard from the general public that landscape conditions and maintenance need to be improved.

Turf and trees are generally perceived as renewable, but it takes generations to grow the Mall’s magnificent shade and ornamental trees, which are listed as historic resources on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the last two decades there has been a significant loss of tree cover within the District of Columbia, affecting not only air quality and temperature, but the quality of life. The National Park Service has partnered with the Casey Tree Foundation on studies and workshops to address this topic. The NPS Center for Urban Ecology has also been actively involved in studying these challenges.

Some areas within the National Mall are very heavily used. Thousands of permitted events annually take a toll on landscape conditions and maintenance. Much of the soil is composed of fill from Potomac River dredging; as a result, soil conditions vary tremendously. The cumulative

effects of soil compaction from both casual use and massive special events have degraded landscape conditions. Compacted turf and soils have caused bare spots in the turf and damaged tree roots, particularly the cherry trees near the Tidal Basin and the American elms on the Mall.

Concerns about the condition of lawns due to foot traffic and wear and tear began to be expressed more than 125 years ago. Numerous soil and turf studies by the National Park Service and the Center for Urban Ecology, as well as others, have been undertaken. The studies have confirmed that soil compaction provides less than ideal conditions for optimum tree growth and results in general prolonged deterioration.

The National Park Service has also looked at costs related to turf recovery and turf renovation for heavily, moderately, and lightly impacted areas. Turf recovery costs (when turf cover is more than 50%) have been estimated per acre based on how long it takes and desired schedules and practices for aeration (shatter or core), seeding (drill or broadcast), fertilizing (organic), and thatching. While turf recovery does not require closing the area, it is desirable to do so. Turf renovation (when turf cover is less than 50%) requires closing the area for a minimum of three months and includes vegetation removal, soil amendment and preparation (rototilling and grading), and seeding. Due to construction projects and increased demand for events, 2005 is the first time in several years that any area on the Mall has been closed for turf recovery or renovation.

The National Park Service is currently studying best management practices, including the most effective landscape maintenance methods, landscape specifications, and approaches to maintaining intensively used landscapes to very high standards. Best practices will also be analyzed to determine if removing and replacing the top 24 inches of soil with a new mix of soil that is air entrained might reduce or slow compaction.

**Planning Objectives** — The National Mall plan will

- define desired natural resource conditions, including landscape standards or classes for different locations within the study area

- define what types of actions should be taken when desired natural and cultural resource conditions are not being met

## Use and Visitor Experience

### *The National Symbolic Landscape within a Complex Urban Framework*

**Issues** — To what extent can this national symbolic landscape function efficiently and be compatible with desired experiences of national and international visitors while meeting the needs of federal and city governmental agencies, local residents, and the local workforce?

**Background** — The National Mall is a pilgrimage site for many people, precisely because it is located at the core of the national capital. It symbolizes the openness and diversity of democracy, and its design captures the country’s core values and ideals. The vitality of urban environments depends on activity and the presence of people. At the same time, the concentration of visitor destinations within the core area and ongoing numerous large-scale gatherings complicates maintenance tasks, making it difficult to schedule recovery and rest periods for natural resources. As a result, landscape conditions on the National Mall are not maintained to the highest standards appropriate to the stature and importance of this great American space.

Visitation drives facility and management needs, and the quality and efficiency of facilities and management directly influence visitor experiences. Basic human needs for food, water, and restrooms must be met. Presenting visitor information, orientation, signs, and maps in differing and inconsistent formats sometimes leads to visitor confusion. Public suggestions for visitor facilities have included a National Mall visitor center, restaurants, pedestrian bridges, and underground parking. Some of these ideas need to be publicly discussed during planning, and others have already been addressed or dismissed in approved regional plans or legislation.

**Planning Objectives** — The National Mall plan will

- establish a common understanding of what constitutes the National Mall

- define desired and appropriate visitor experiences, activities, facilities, and visitor information standards that are consistent with the stature of the National Mall and that will preserve its character
- actively encourage public participation in the understanding of planning issues; coordinate planning and consult with federal agencies to maximize sound and consistent decision making and monetary value for taxpayers

### *Stage for Demonstrations and Special Events*

**Issue** — Within the confines of policy and regulation, to what extent can demonstrations and events be sustainably and efficiently staged on the National Mall while simultaneously achieving desired resource conditions?

**Background** — The National Mall has been referred to as the nation’s front yard, the space where national pageantry, celebrations, cultural events, and demonstrations occur. This highly visible space in the heart of the nation’s capital has evolved into the national forum — the place where large and small demonstrations and rallies take place, and where people can peacefully petition their government, present and debate differing positions, advocate for action, or express pride in their identity, organizations, or causes.

**Types of Use:** Each year there are around 3,000 permitted events, including

- public demonstrations in connection with First Amendment rights
- annual celebrations, such as the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Memorial Day, the Folklife Festival, and the Fourth of July
- regularly scheduled concerts and cultural programs
- hundreds of events such as solar technology displays, book fairs, public employee recognition events, the laying of commemorative wreaths, re-enlistment ceremonies, or school group musical performances, as well as one-time events, such as a state funeral or home building for Hurricane Katrina victims

- annual marathons and races benefiting various causes, and hundreds of recreational league team sports

Additionally around 900 commercial filming permits are issued every year.

For some visitors public gatherings add to their experience of the National Mall, while for others such gatherings may detract because they limit traditional views, recreational activities, and access to facilities and locations. NPS concession-run visitor transportation may be unable to operate during various events, and public access to memorials may be restricted on July 4th because of safety precautions associated with fireworks displays.

Impacts of Demonstrations and Events: As discussed under “Defining Landscape Standards,” the wear and tear of concentrated activity affects the built and landscape environment. Facilities can be overwhelmed with use, and vegetation cannot easily recover when turf becomes worn to the ground and soils heavily compacted. Areas adjacent to sidewalks may be damaged as use spills off walks, or space may be inadequate for crowd control and security screening. The combined effects generate periodic complaints about the appearance of the National Mall.

Relationship to Events on the Capitol Grounds or the White House & President’s Park: The National Park Service is authorized by law to annually sponsor a series of no more than four concerts by the National Symphony Orchestra on the west lawn of the U. S. Capitol grounds. Presidential inaugurations on Pennsylvania Avenue, the Pageant of Peace on the Ellipse, and other events may take place off the National Mall, but they are coordinated with events held on the National Mall.

NPS Management Areas, Visitor Use, and Alternatives: The NPS planning process is based on articulating specific desired resource condition goals for park areas and on determining what visitor experiences, activities, and facilities are appropriate. The management areas must conform to applicable law and NPS requirements and regulations, such as NPS regulations at 36 CFR 7.96 and case law related to the First Amendment (see the “Legal Considerations”

paper). Planning alternatives typically portray several approaches to the way that different management areas are designated. Public understanding of and input into the development of management areas and alternatives is important.

Since the U.S. Park Police no longer estimate crowds at public events on the National Mall, determining the carrying capacity of specific areas on the National Mall will require different methods for establishing visitor use levels that will ensure that desired conditions are met.

**Planning Objectives.** The National Mall plan will

- set conceptual use capacity targets, as well as desired and expected social experiences within different management areas of the National Mall

### *Recreational Use*

**Issue** — To what extent can recreational uses of the National Mall be achieved in combination with public gatherings and visitation to monuments, memorials, and museums?

**Background** — The National Mall has historically been the location for numerous local recreational activities. These activities have changed over time, following recreational interests and trends. Passive recreation, such as picnicking, strolling, or sunbathing, occurs simultaneously with informal or organized activities, such as pickup games and league sports. The majority of active recreation occurs on open turf areas, with groups supplying their own equipment, such as goals and bases. Recreational uses such as bicycling, in-line skating, strolling, skateboarding, softball/ baseball, soccer, polo, football, paddleboat riding, fishing, Frisbee throwing, kite flying, picnicking, tennis, volleyball, soccer, field hockey, rugby, street hockey, games of catch, and chess occur without NPS or concessioner involvement. The only recreational facilities provided are the paddleboats on the Tidal Basin, seasonal ice skating facilities, and a few locations with backstops or goal posts for games.

The National Mall’s convenient location and open spaces offer opportunities to help meet the recreational demand of the federal and local

workforce. Many workers take advantage of open areas to lunch, read, visit, or jog. Various governmental agencies have recreational sports teams; for example, the congressional softball league, which has been in existence since the 1970s, has approximately 200 teams, many of which practice and play on the National Mall.

Differing goals may result in conflicts among various types of users. Out-of-town visitors typically want opportunities for passive recreation and sightseeing, along with access to monuments, memorials, and cultural destinations. Local residents, however, may desire consistent access to public open space that is suitable for active recreation. Large-scale events in particular may interfere with either or both of these uses.

In many areas joggers and bicycle riders have created dirt pathways, or social trails, either adjacent to existing walkways or between sections of walkways. This has resulted from a preference for a softer surface for running, the desire to be separate from pedestrians, or in response to passing people on walks. Over time these paths have become compacted to the hardness of concrete, making it difficult to reestablish turf. These social trails contribute to the perception that the National Mall is not maintained to the desired standard.

**Planning Objectives** — The National Mall plan will

- determine the appropriate types, location, and levels of recreational use that can be sustainably accommodated and provided by the National Park Service or its concessioners
- define a range of appropriate and compatible activities for each management area

***Interpretation, Education, Orientation, and Information***

**Issue** — What opportunities or improvements in interpretation, education, orientation, and information are desired so that park visitors and all Americans can understand and enjoy the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, as well as develop a

personal stewardship ethic supporting their preservation?

**Background** — The NPS *Management Policies 2006* state,

Interpretive programs are the methods the National Park Service uses to connect people to their parks, with opportunities for all visitors to form their own intellectual, emotional, and physical connections to the meanings and values found in the parks' stories. Facilitating those opportunities through effective interpretive and educational programs will encourage the development of a personal stewardship ethic and broaden public support for preserving and protecting park resources so that they may be enjoyed by present and future generations.

Visitors come to the National Mall to experience and learn more about our national capital and the wealth of educational, cultural, civic, and recreational opportunities that it offers. Popular visitor destinations include the many NPS-managed monuments and memorials on the National Mall and in Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, the museums of the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institution, the National Archives, the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, the Botanic Gardens, the Supreme Court, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Many visitors are overwhelmed by the wide array of destination choices — the average person visits four to five on each day of a three-day visit. At each of these destinations visitors may have information presented to them in a variety of ways. With many international tourists, special efforts are made to communicate with non-English speaking visitors.

Educational and interpretive opportunities are affected by the numerous activities that occur within the National Mall and on Pennsylvania Avenue, from First Amendment demonstrations to large-scale annual celebrations. Space and time constraints also limit interpretive contacts at a site like the Washington Monument, where only 1,600 tickets are issued per day on a timed schedule. Delivery methods for programs must remain flexible to accommodate visitor needs and to respond to constantly changing situations.



NPS Sites and Exhibits: NPS staff and volunteers provide interpretive programs to thousands of visitors at the various monuments and memorials on the National Mall and in Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park. Interpretive exhibits at the Lincoln, Jefferson, and FDR memorials, the Washington Monument, and the Old Post Office deepen visitor understanding of our national heritage. (The Old Post Office Tower is not an NPS facility, although the Park Service provides visitor tours and education.)

Interpretive and Educational Programs. Interpretive and educational programs are based on current scholarship and are presented to a diverse public audience in various ways to convey historical information and support resource stewardship and protection.

- Rangers provide regular programs throughout the National Mall.
- Special event educational programs include the annual Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration, presidential birthday commemorations, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival. One very popular educational offering is the “I Have a Dream” program, offered during the winter, when students can reenact Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous 1963 speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.
- The Junior Ranger Program provides age-specific activities and programs.
- Living history programs portray American military heritage.
- Guided bike tours provide visitors with a different way to learn about our cultural and natural history.
- Rangers monitor public gathering permits and work with partners and volunteers in presenting interpretation, orientation, and information at NPS sites and special programs.
- Ranger staff provide educational information to area teachers through annual teacher workshops, share up-to-date information about sites with local tour guides, and assist in training concessioners by providing accurate park information. Curriculum-based programs are scheduled

onsite and as outreach visits to schools in the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland.

NPS Outreach and Media: The National Mall & Memorial Parks receive numerous requests for information, and the NPS website ([www.nps.gov/nama](http://www.nps.gov/nama)) receives an average of 5 million hits a month. To meet these needs, a radio station (AM 1670) has recently been started, and staff research, develop, and update brochures, informational handouts, wayside exhibits, maps, and signs, as well as keep the media informed.

*Planning Objectives* — The National Mall plan will

- publicly confirm the purpose and significance of the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park
- identify desired visitor experiences and educational opportunities
- discuss appropriate interpretive and educational activities and facilities for each management area

### *Public Access*

*Issue* — To what extent can public access to the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park be improved by various modes (pedestrian, bicycle, or other)?

*Background* — Public access to the National Mall represents the fundamental openness of a democracy. This space is owned and highly valued by its citizens, and it should be accessible to all.

Transportation and parking are challenges for people planning their visit to the National Mall. There are multiple modes of access to and through the National Mall, but getting from place to place and being able to meet basic comfort needs sometimes affects visitors’ capacity to fully appreciate the memorials, monuments, and recreational spaces.

The National Park Service is completing a *Visitor Transportation Study Environmental Assessment* to more fully analyze visitor transportation options.

**Pedestrian Access:** Numerous sidewalks and trails make the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park pedestrian friendly. However, exploring four to five destinations along the 2-mile-long National Mall means that many visitors are exhausted by the end of their day, and some visitors may not be physically able to access all the destinations they wish. A 2003 visitor survey showed that nearly a quarter of the respondents said walking long distances was difficult for someone in their group. A reasonable distance for walking, as determined by planners and visitor experience experts, is estimated to be between a quarter and a half mile (a 5- to 10-minute walk for most people).

Walking is typically combined with other ways to get around — sightseeing services, taxi, bus, car, and Metrorail. The most difficult place to access for pedestrians also using public transit is the west end of the National Mall, which is three-quarters of a mile from the nearest Metrorail station. Public parking within walking distance of the west end of the National Mall is available along Ohio Drive SW and Constitution Avenue NW.

To make the area more accessible, public comments have suggested adding pedestrian bridges over north-south streets crossing the National Mall (such as 3rd, 7th, 14th, 15th, and 17th streets NW/SW).

**Road System:** The National Mall is surrounded or bisected by roads, freeways, parkways, and arterial roads, and some tunnel under it. Park roads are important components of the city circulation system. An estimated 440,000 vehicles travel through the National Mall on an average workday. The District of Columbia manages the roadway of Pennsylvania Avenue, adding another level of jurisdictional oversight.

**Transit:** Public transit to the National Mall is available by means of Metrorail and Metrobus. In 1969 the National Park Service began providing a visitor transportation system through an independent third-party operator; other entities also provide sightseeing services, but they are not formally affiliated with the National Park Service. In April 2006, WMATA Circulator buses began operating a Smithsonian and National Gallery route between 3rd and 17th streets

NW/SW, using existing bus stops on Constitution Avenue NW and Independence Avenue SW.

**Sightseeing Tours:** Hop-on / -off sightseeing tours are offered through the NPS concessioner, Tourmobile, and by other providers.

**Tour Buses:** The tour bus industry and NPS staff estimate that a third of visitors travel to and within downtown Washington by charter tour bus. The national tour bus industry consistently ranks Washington, D.C., among the top three most popular charter tour destinations in the country. In addition to 98 bus parking locations on the National Mall, the District of Columbia and other agencies provide bus parking at the old Convention Center site, Union Station, and RFK Stadium.

**Parking:** There are about 16,000 metered, on-street parking spaces in the District, supplemented by numerous public parking garages within a half mile of the National Mall. However, on any given day there are many more drivers than parking spaces within the District of Columbia. To address congestion and insufficient parking, approved plans by the National Capital Planning Commission envision a transit-oriented future for central Washington. Previous plans proposed underground parking for the National Mall; however, adjacent roads are already at or near capacity much of the time and could not accommodate additional use that a garage would attract. This idea does not align with regional transportation planning.

Visitors who drive to downtown locations contribute to traffic congestion, may become frustrated at the difficulty in finding parking near their desired destination, and may receive parking tickets if they are unable to get back to where they parked before rush-hour parking restrictions begin. The 2003 visitor transportation survey indicated that 70% of visitors would be willing to park 15–30 minutes from the visitor core if frequent transit access was available. The National Park Service provides approximately 1,000 free on-street public parking spaces in and around the Mall. The District has hundreds of parking meters on north-south cross streets (3rd, 4th and 7th streets NW/SW).

**Personal Transportation Vehicles:** Bicycle access is encouraged by the National Park Service. NPS rangers provide bike tours, and bikes may be rented at the Thompson Boat Center on Rock Creek Parkway. Rental bikes and guided tours are also commercially available in the downtown area. The East Coast Greenway, a national trail popular with bicyclists, passes through the National Mall.

In addition to bicycling, Segway® Human Transporters (HTs) and electric scooters have become more popular, and proposals have been made to accommodate their recreational use for individual tours as well as group tours. However, Segway® HTs and electric scooters are defined as “motorized” vehicles and therefore are not allowed on park walkways under NPS regulations (36 CFR 1.4). The park accommodates their interim use on some north-south sidewalks. D.C. regulations allow personal transportation vehicles on city sidewalks outside the central business district. The 2006 *Visitor Transportation Study* has identified two additional routes to accommodate Segway® HT use. Interim use and additional routes will be monitored to identify any safety issues and conflicts with other modes of transportation, including walking and bicycling.

**Access for People with Disabilities:** During recent transportation planning some public concerns were expressed about insufficient parking and lack of convenient drop-off locations for visitors with disabilities. Some individuals with disabilities are able to use Segway® HTs as a mobility aid, and this use, as well as wheelchairs and electric scooters, is allowed on the National Mall for individuals with disabilities.

**Planning Objectives** — The National Mall plan will

- incorporate results of the *Visitor Transportation Study*, address general circulation issues, and identify what types of transportation related facilities are needed in management areas

## Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park

**Issue** — To what extent is it desirable to modify the management of Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park in order to provide a vibrant urban park environment with lively and enriching visitor experiences?

**Background** — Pennsylvania Avenue provides spectacular views of the U.S. Capitol, and it is the site of numerous special events and First Amendment demonstrations. Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park includes memorials such as the Navy Memorial and Pershing Park; statues of founding fathers, important jurists, and heroes of the Revolution, the Civil War, and World War I; and several fountains. The Navy coordinates programming for its memorial with the National Park Service. The Park Service also manages tours of the Old Post Office Tower, which affords excellent 360 degree views of the city.

In 1996 Congress dissolved the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, which was responsible for the revitalization of the avenue, and distributed the corporation’s holdings and responsibilities to the General Services Administration, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the National Park Service (see the “Legal Considerations” paper). The transfer legislation map used the name Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park to delineate the smaller area within Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site over which the National Park Service is responsible for management, administration, maintenance, law enforcement, visitor services, resource protection, and historic preservation. Congress also authorized the National Park Service to arrange for special events, festivals, concerts, or other art and cultural programs. The goals of the National Mall & Memorial Parks are to manage the park as a ceremonial place befitting its location and to cultivate it to be a lively and vibrant destination for residents and visitors.

South of Pennsylvania Avenue is the Federal Triangle, which consists of federal buildings from Constitution Avenue NW to 15th Street NW. The Federal Triangle includes the John A. Wilson District of Columbia Building, the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade

Center, the Commerce Building, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Justice, and the National Archives. Buildings are distinct but united by scale and a similar stone color. The federal buildings may include bas relief sculpture, decorative lighting, and carved words or ideas. The Federal Triangle separates the National Mall from Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park, making it a challenge to physically connect the two historic areas.

North of Pennsylvania Avenue is a mix of federally and privately owned modern buildings, featuring a variety of restaurants, hotels, stores, and theaters. The largest buildings are the J. Edgar Hoover Building, the U.S. District Court, and the Canadian Embassy. The Newseum — The Interactive Museum of News, is under construction on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue east of 6th Street NW.

The management of Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park poses some challenges.

1. As previously mentioned, Congress granted some of the responsibilities of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation to the National Capital Planning Commission and the General Services Administration, as well as the National Park Service. Consequently, the national historic park differs from most parks in that the National Park Service does not have unilateral decision-making authority over park development and use. To clarify this situation, the three agencies entered into a memorandum of agreement for considering decisions that affect their respective interests.
2. Portions of the park consist of easement areas. Some easements allow public use as envisioned by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation and carried on by the National Park Service, and may also allow occupants of the adjacent buildings to make use of these same easement areas for activities such as sidewalk cafés. Other easements authorize the National Park Service to conduct similar types of activities so long as they do not compete with commercial activities conducted within adjacent buildings.

3. The national historic park is bisected by Pennsylvania Avenue NW. The roadway is under the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia and is managed with a different set of policies and regulations. Moreover, Pennsylvania Avenue NW is a major thoroughfare, with all the incumbent issues of a heavily traveled city street.

The combination of all these factors adds complexity to the NPS decision-making process for Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park.

**Uses:** In addition to being an active boulevard, Pennsylvania Avenue is used for parades, events, and activities such as street fairs. Quadrennial presidential inaugural parades require security measures, the removal of all street lights and poles in the roadway, and the installation of bleachers.

**Commercial Uses:** In Pershing Park an NPS concessioner operates a snack/souvenir stand and winter ice skating. Other permitted businesses include a flower cart, two food carts, and sidewalk restaurant seating. Unauthorized newspaper vending machines have been placed throughout the park area.

As previously described, easements granted to or by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation permit landowners to engage in limited commercial activities. All such areas are on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Making the urban environment vital and alive depends on activity and the presence of people. However, the National Park Service and the District of Columbia have different use and permit standards and requirements. The District allows vendors on the streets during festivals. Over the years there have been various sidewalk vending proposals by the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. NPS regulations do not allow temporary displays or the sale of art and crafts in some areas. These differing standards make it less easy to achieve the goal of a vibrant urban streetscape.

**Planning Objectives** — The National Mall plan will

- establish desired conditions for Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park

that will ensure it is a vibrant and lively urban park, in accordance with the 1996 Memorandum of Agreement

## Operations

### *Security and Public Safety*

**Issue** — To what extent can security and public safety on the National Mall and in Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park be balanced with the openness characteristic of a democracy?

**Background** — The National Mall attracts immense numbers of visitors who need and expect adequate safety, protection from crime, and the ability to get help if they have health emergencies.

The U.S. Park Police, the U.S. Capitol Police, the District Metropolitan Police, the Smithsonian Institution Police, and the Office of the Military District of Washington are just a few of those who provide for public safety and security within the area. In accordance with the National Park Service’s emergency medical services policy (Director’s Order #51) the National Mall & Memorial Parks are undergoing an emergency medical needs assessment, which evaluates the delivery of first-on-scene medical services on park land. Approximately half of park staff are trained in basic first aid, and a few employees have advanced emergency medical training.

The National Capital Planning Commission and consultants have been involved for many years in reviewing the planning, design, and implementation of security measures throughout the District, even before September 11, 2001. Constructed and proposed interim and permanent measures to protect important symbols of our nation have been criticized for altering the character, openness, and democratic symbolism of the National Mall, and also for not addressing the area comprehensively.

NPS perimeter security projects have been completed or are underway for the Washington Monument and the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. Museums lining the Mall also have perimeter security projects underway. The General Services Administration and the National Capital Planning Commission are

considering perimeter security for federal buildings in the Federal Triangle and on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue.

**Planning Objectives** — The National Mall plan will

- provide safety and security measures that are compatible with the openness of the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue
- address the general impacts of security operations on visitor experiences

Planning will not supersede existing security plans for individual memorials or museums, but may offer opportunities for further public discussion of broad philosophical and design approaches to managing both safety and security.

### *Facilities*

**Issue** — What visitor facilities and architectural character are appropriate for the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park?

**Background** — The National Park Service provides visitor facilities such as restrooms, bookstores, and concession and food service facilities. Past planning proposed a wider variety of restaurants and food service.

**NPS Facilities on the National Mall:** The following facilities are provided on the National Mall for visitor needs and comfort:

- **Public Restrooms** — Restrooms are provided at the Jefferson, Lincoln, FDR, and World War II memorials. Restrooms at the Washington Monument are being renovated. Restrooms near the Sylvan Theater, Constitution Gardens, and south of the Lincoln Reflecting Pool date from the 1960s. There are no public restrooms at the east end of the National Mall. Total NPS facilities include 80 toilets and 28 urinals. Restrooms are cleaned at least twice daily.
- **Site Furniture** — There are over 1,000 benches or seating areas in both shaded and sunny areas on the National Mall. Most seating is permanent and is supplemented by low walls designed to serve as benches. Many visitors also sit on the steps of the

Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. Changing standards for seating that is accessible to disabled users may change the character of seating over time since the historic park benches do not have arm rests.

There are over 2,000 light fixtures, nearly 900 trash containers, and additional site furnishings that include bollards, post-and-chain fences, and signs. Occasionally site furnishings, such as signs, bike racks, or seating, have been custom designed for specific memorials. Additionally, some site furnishings may be contributing elements of historic landscapes and may be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Having a variety of non-standardized furnishings, such as irrigation systems, mechanical systems for water features, and light fixtures and bulbs can contribute to maintenance challenges because of the need to stock an assortment of replacement parts and be familiar with multiple maintenance practices.

- *Walkways* — Very pedestrian friendly, the National Mall has a diversity of wide and narrower walks and paths that offer different experiences. Surface materials include gravel, exposed aggregate, stone, pavers, and asphalt. Most walkways are accessible to people with disabilities, although steeper grades in some areas and some surface materials, such as gravel, may be less easy to walk on or use a wheelchair.

During large events, such as the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival, the number of visitors may exceed the capacity of walkways, with use spilling onto adjacent landscaped areas, adversely affecting turf and tree roots.

Security checkpoints that are set up on walkways for some events may result in queue delays as people wait to proceed through screening.

- *Bookstores* — Bookstores at the Washington Monument and the Lincoln, Jefferson, and FDR memorials sell related educational materials, as well as publications for parks in this region. The bookstores are operated by an NPS nonprofit cooperating association.

- *Concessions* — The National Park Service awards and administers contracts to provide visitor services in national parks. Concession facilities within the study area provide food service (generally hot and cold drinks, water, hot dogs, pizza, candy, snacks, and ice cream), as well as film, postcards, and souvenirs. Concession facilities on the Mall are located near the Smithsonian Institution museums (American History, Natural History, Arts and Industries, and Air and Space). Tables and chairs are provided for customers.

Two concession stands, one north and one south of the Lincoln Memorial, are being rebuilt. A small snack stand operates south of the Jefferson Memorial exhibit area. A small concession facility has been run seasonally in conjunction with paddleboat rentals on the Tidal Basin. A new permanent location is needed for a concession stand near the Washington Monument.

Non-NPS Facilities on the National Mall: The National Gallery and the Smithsonian Institution museums, as well as the National Archives, provide restrooms, stores, and often a variety of food service. The Smithsonian Institution operates a historic carousel near the Smithsonian Castle through a memorandum of agreement with the National Park Service. Security checks control access to most of these facilities.

Permanent Facilities in Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park:

- *Restrooms* — Public restrooms are provided by the National Park Service at Pershing Park.
- *Site Furnishings / Sidewalks* — Site furniture, as well as paving materials and patterns on sidewalks, were designed for Pennsylvania Avenue. There are approximately 120 benches, numerous trash containers, and street signs. Some lighting and street lights are removed to accommodate inaugural parades.
- *Concession Facilities / Commercial Services* — An NPS concession stand at Pershing Park provides food service (snacks) and is converted seasonally to serve ice skaters. Two carts provide food service, one near

the Old Post Office and the other near 7th Street NW. A flower cart is also present.

- *Other Facilities* — Some seasonal sidewalk cafés are allowed pursuant to easements. Facilities at the Old Post Office are not under NPS management.

**Planning Objectives.** The National Mall plan will

- identify needed and desired visitor facilities, concession services, and operational facilities, as well as appropriate locations and general architectural and sidewalk character guidelines

## Partnerships and Working Relationships

*Issue* — To what extent can partnerships and other relationships help achieve the planning vision for the National Mall and Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park?

*Background* — Partnerships and working relationships are vital to the operation, preservation, and enjoyment of the National Mall & Memorial Parks. Within the study area, working relationships are extensive, varied, and often complicated. As of fall 2006 the park's partnership office has 23 written agreements on a range of subjects.

Federal Partners within the Study Area: Many visitor destinations on the National Mall are operated by others, such as the museums of the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institution. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a small visitor center in their building on the Mall, and another Forest Service visitor center near 14th Street SW and Independence Avenue SW. Directly east of the National Mall, the Architect of the Capitol has jurisdiction over a large area that contains popular visitor destinations such as the Botanic Gardens, the Library of Congress, and the Supreme Court, as well as the Capitol. A new Capitol visitor center is scheduled to open in late 2007. Near the Tidal Basin are two popular visitor destinations — the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Popular visitor destinations in Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park include the National Archives and the National Aquarium in the Commerce Building, which also contains the White House Visitor Center in Baldrige Hall.

Public and other activities and programs such as Fourth of July celebrations, presidential inaugural activities, the Folklife Festival, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival involve facilities and locations under multiple jurisdictions. The Smithsonian Institution and the National Park Service co-sponsor the National Folklife Festival on the Mall each summer. The National Park Service also works with the Architect of the Capitol on annual concerts and support for state events.

Legislative or Planning Relationships: NPS consultation partnerships include the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, the D.C. State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Interagency Workgroup for the Mall, and the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Operational Partners: A nonprofit cooperating association, Eastern National, runs bookstores at NPS sites and uses proceeds to benefit the National Park Service. The U.S. Park Police have primary law enforcement jurisdiction on the National Mall, but also work with the U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Secret Service, D.C. Metropolitan Police, and others to provide safety and security within the area. The National Park Service has partnership agreements related to programming for the U.S. Navy Memorial, and the U.S. Navy operates a visitor center adjacent to the memorial. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority provides a subway Metrorail stop within the Mall, near 12th Street SW and Jefferson Drive SW and on Pennsylvania Avenue NW near the U.S. Navy Memorial.

Commercial Service Providers: Through third-party contracts, the National Park Service provides visitors with interpretive transportation services, food, merchandise and souvenirs, ice skating, paddleboats, guidebooks and informational materials, and similar services. Within Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Park the Park Service has authorized a flower cart and sidewalk restaurant seating. At present, several

other Pennsylvania Avenue businesses are exploring various commercial opportunities.

Volunteers in Parks (VIPs): NPS volunteers help provide orientation, support events and programs, work on special projects, assist with cleanup and resource management activities, and participate in living history programs. Volunteers range from school groups to individuals with interests in specific memorials.

Authorized Funding Partnership: In April 2003 the National Park Service signed a memorandum of agreement with the Trust for the National Mall to raise and dispense funds to improve the condition of the National Mall. The trust has a goal of “restoration, revitalization and future maintenance of the National Mall . . . to achieve its historic ideal as a gracious, vibrant, and welcoming space for residents and visitors, as well as a grand natural setting for important ceremonial, educational, and recreational activities.” The

trust will fund maintenance and construction projects to ensure that higher standards identified through planning for the National Mall are achieved.

Other Funding Partners: Through the National Park Foundation, a Tree Replacement Fund accepts donations for trees. Various memorial funding groups have raised private funds to construct memorials authorized by federal law. While the completed project is turned over to the National Park Service for operation, the groups often remain actively interested in the memorial.

*Planning Objectives* — The National Mall plan will

- identify desired conditions and needed facilities, thereby improving communication and working relationships